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# POCKET NOVELS



## The Backwoodsmen.





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THE  
BACKWOODSMEN;

OR,

ON THE TRAIL.

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BY ASA BEALL.

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# THE WOODMEN.

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## CHAPTER I.

Now, tradition unfolds her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time!

Once more on the rock-ribbed mountains of the Alleghanies; once more in the boundless wilderness, and the rushing torrents and frightful precipices; once more amid the grandeur of undisturbed nature, in the luxuriant quietude of the sunshine, and the sublime rush of the tempest; once more amid God's stupendous works, where the exquisite melody of bird and insect is sweetly blended with the mysterious hum of inanimate nature.

Here tradition points, with its unerring finger, and here we, as truthful chroniclers of the past, must follow. With the written history we will not intermeddle. Loftier spirits have sung its bewitching strains. We breathe an humble atmosphere. We deal in legends; the mere fragments of history—unwritten as yet, existing here and there, seen only through the dim twilight of other days, around which time has thrown its rich mantle—investing them with a fascinating romance, and a lofty chivalry, that renders them deeply interesting. It is true, they are but small portions of the magnificent whole—the mere threads of that splendid woof, out of which the history of our own beloved land has been fashioned; but they are threads of golden texture. The resemblance they bear to the written history is eminently striking. The same lineaments



pervade both. One is a magnificent obelisk, towering up majestically to the azure firmament, and emblazoned with a thousand glorious inscriptions, typifying the heroic deeds of our fathers, whilst the other is but a simple column, beautifully symmetrical in its proportions, it is true, but bearing the names of humble individuals alone, without heraldic device or other inscription to commemorate their exalted virtues. The first exists in the enduring records of our country; the latter in the treacherous memory of man, and must soon, amid the general mutability of things of this earth, pass away, unless speedily embodied upon canvas, or preserved in some other durable form.

The incidents of the following tradition occurred in the autumn of the year of our Lord, 1775. Immediately subsequent to the battle of Monongahela, the Indians dwelling beyond the outskirts of civilization, feeling that all restraint was removed by their sanguinary triumph, precipitated themselves, like a destructive inundation, upon the unprotected inhabitants along the eastern base of the Alleghany Mountains. An instinctive sense of wrong, coupled with the seductive language and insinuating arguments of French emissaries, stimulated them to the perpetration of the most diabolical outrages that ever stained the records of human history. This fair heritage of our fathers, stretching away for many miles along the northern branch of the Potomac, and sleeping quietly amid magnificent old mountains, whose lofty summits reach far upward toward the deep, blue sky, became the theatre of their sanguinary incursions.

Many a long year has since been buried in the grave of the past, and many a one who witnessed the developments of the scenes in that bloody drama has been summoned away, yet the visible effect of the invisible workings of the dark and terrible passions that convulsed the souls of these untutored sons of the wilderness are exhibited in all their naked deformity, in the numerous ruins of houses and log-cabins that still remain along our valleys and mountain heights.

The most tragical event ever recorded in history, or em-



bodied in the writings of fiction, scarcely furnished a parallel to the cold-blooded and wanton cruelty displayed at the excision of 1775, in the valley of the Potomac. Old men, whose venerable heads were whitened by the frosts of many winters, helpless women and inoffensive children, were immolated indiscriminately upon the altar of unrestrained passion. The sweet valley of the Potomac was deluged in blood. Houses were plundered, and burnt to the ground; the inmates compelled to fly for safety into the fastnesses of the surrounding mountains, or submit to the tomahawk, the fagot and stake. The night was lit up by the glare of burning houses, and made hideous by the demoniac war-whoop of the savage, and the day disclosed one continuous scene of death and desolation. But the eye of an avenging God was upon the instigators of these horrid deeds, and terrible was their retribution.

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## CHAPTER II.

“Arm! arm, my lords! Rome never had more cause!  
The Goths have gathered head; and with a power  
Of high-resolved men, bent to the spoil,  
They hither march amain, under conduct  
Of Lucius.

*Titus Andronicus.*

It was in the month of October, on the day previous to the occurrence of the scenes we are about to describe. Morning had dawned, bright and beautiful, upon the world. The sun rose up in unclouded magnificence over the eastern hills, and bathed the sweet rural valley of the Potomac in a flood of soft, golden light. The pearly dew drop still lingered upon the autumn flowers, and garnished the russet, crimson and gold livery of the trees with a bright, sparkling brilliancy. It was, indeed, a lovely morning; and in looking over the peaceful valley, with the radiant sunshine flooding its beautiful undulating fields—with the lowing herds browsing upon their still luxu-



riant pastures, and the broad, tranquil bosom of the Potomac gleaming like a gigantic mirror set in mountains for a frame—we realize all the most extravagant description of the glories of Arcadia.

But humanity involuntarily shudders when we recollect how brief a space of time must intervene before the inhabitants shall be startled by the war-whoop of savage men; when the red combat, with all its accumulated horrors, shall come to crimson their threshold; when the light of the conflagration, whose unearthly gleams are always prophetic of approaching danger, shall illumine the surrounding darkness; and when the dark spirit of desolation, like the awful curse of the Deity, shall prevail over this fair scene.

Vain, for a time, will be the warrior's might to check the frightful carnage. Battle-signals will continue to gleam over the hills, in the deep forests and quiet dales, with savage grandeur. The mountains will re-echo the war-cry of ruthless savages; and the prayer for mercy, the groans of expiring mothers, and the wails of helpless infancy, shall be all unheeded, and men shall seem devils incarnate. The obduracy of their hearts will be shown in many a bleeding scalp and murdered victim.

But we are digressing. It was on this morning of beauty that a horseman came galloping over the valley, toward a modest-looking cottage, situated on the banks of the Potomac, near where now stands the city of Cumberland. The sides of the noble animal were saturated with foaming flakes, but he dashed forward with vigorous bounds, fairly disdaining the earth he trod upon, so graceful were his motions.

His master was appareled somewhat after the Indian custom. His dress was composed of a hunting-shirt, and pants of linsey-woolsey, with moccasins of deer-skin, and a beaver cap; but neither marred the symmetry of his person or gallant bearing. In his hand he carried a ponderous rifle, the inseparable companion of the frontiersman, and above the belt encircling his waist gleamed the haft of a glittering knife. He appeared much excited; his dark



eyes sparkled with unusual fire. Dismounting, he threw his rein to an old African servant in attendance, and hastily entered the cottage.

This old descendant of Ham had passed the meridian of his day, but his tall frame was still stout and muscular, and a more ungainly human being could scarce be seen. His small, twinkling black eyes were deeply rested in his forehead; his nose was flat, the point of which reached downward almost to a level with his mouth, that extended nearly from ear to ear. His huge lips were thick and lubberly, giving them an appearance bordering on absolute deformity. In addition to these decided characteristics, he boasted a pair of legs as long as Roaring Ralph Stackpole's, but quite different in their peculiar formation. Ralph's were straight as reeds, but his were as crooked as scythe-sneaths. His skin was black as midnight, and, as might easily be supposed from his color, he gloried in the appropriate cognomen of Ebony, which was generally abbreviated to Eb., for shortness.

But, if Ebony was uncouth in aspect, he possessed a kind and generous heart, ever alive with sympathy for the sufferings of others.

After greeting the young gentleman with a polite bow, he took the horse away, with a broad grin upon his countenance, muttering to himself as he went along:

"It's glad dat young gemman hab come. Golly! won't young Miss's eyes sparkle with delight! She lub dat man to kill; and de Lord help dis ole nigger for tinkin so, but if dey don't come togedder soon, dis child is given right away to hang beself up by de froat, like a dead 'possum. Yah! yah! yah!"

The old fellow laughed long and heartily at his quaint conceit, and then hummed the notes of a rude song, the burden of which seemed to be exactly as follows:—

"De courtin's now ober,  
And de gallant hab come  
To marry young missus,  
And take her 'long home."



"Miles Howard, as I live!" exclaimed an old man, whose silver locks and bowed aspect denoted extreme old age, shaking the new-comer cordially by the hand. "Welcome, my dear boy—welcome back!"

"Thank you, my good friend," answered Miles Howard.

"Well, really, I am very happy to see you; but what's the news, my boy, what's the news?"

"I fear, my dear sir, I come as the bearer of unwelcome tidings."

"How so?"

"The French, it is said, have instigated the Indians to make an incursion upon this settlement, and they are assembling in great numbers for that purpose. I came to apprize you of the imminent danger suspended over your head, that you may make suitable preparations to avert the approaching calamity."

"I am much obliged to you for your kind solicitude, but I apprehend but little danger. It has only been a few weeks since a deputation arrived here, bearing protestations of their feelings of good fellowship, and earnest desires to cultivate sentiments of unity. Besides, we are cultivators of the soil, and mingle not in the contests of the battle-field. Our hands have never been imbrued in the blood of our fellow-creatures; and the din and slash of arms, the glitter of spear and battle-axe, the hoarse word of command, and the rush and conflict of contending foes, fiercely struggling for the mastery, we regard with sentiments of religious horror. They are cognizant of these facts, and what motive they can have for disturbing the holy tranquility of this peaceful valley, and in driving the plough-share of ruin deep into its sacred bosom, is a mystery I cannot divine."

"The same incentive," Miles Howard replied, "that all reckless and abandoned renegades of society and ruthless savages have for the perpetration of their base deeds. They are actuated by an insatiable thirst for human blood, and an unnatural propensity to extend the dark bosom of destruction over the land. They are a treacherous set;



and their messages of peace were designed to lull you into a fancied security, and thus make their contemplated attack more easy of accomplishment. Confide not in them—they are phantoms calculated to deceive.”

“But surely,” inquired Guy Lovel, “I shall be exempt from injury? I have done nothing to render myself obnoxious to them.”

“No, sir; you will not come out of the ordeal unscathed by the fire. You exerted your influence in organizing a company of men to accompany the unfortunate Braddock on his expedition against the French, and that alone, aside from the fact that the French, and their Indian allies, are sworn enemies to all the subjects of his majesty, the King of England, would render you a distinguished object on which to expend their malignant hatred.”

Guy Lovel was now in his dotage, and possessed a large proportion of that obstinate incredulity so characteristic of old people. He was not disposed to give credence to an opinion antagonistic to his own, unless advanced by his lovely grand-daughter, whose gentle dictation, his mind, after the imbecilities of old age had come upon him, implicitly followed.

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### CHAPTER III.

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“Yet again, methinks,  
Some unknown sorrow, ripe in future's womb,  
Is coming toward me.” *Shakespeare*

Never, perhaps, had the celebrated valley of the Potomac beheld a creation more transcendantly lovely than Blanche Lovel. To say that she was the very embodiment of grace and beauty would be inadequate to express all that she was. Her form was something above the medium stature, and graceful as the willow; her eyes were large, dark and lustrous as those of a gazelle; her hair, which hung in rich profusion about a neck that would



have shamed the proud boast of the Grecian sculptor, was black and glossy as the sable plumes of the raven; her brow lofty and beautifully white, and her cheeks of that delicate and transparent purity which the master hand of Phidias essayed in vain to imitate.

But, if the beauty of her person was perfect, the powers of her mind were transcendent. The impress of God's most glorious gift unto his children—the impress of the immortal mind—mind, that grapples with things infinite, triumphs over matter, and reduces chaos into forms of exquisite loveliness—was visibly stamped upon her pure white forehead; it gleamed forth in her dark eyes, irradiated every lineament of her countenance, and spoke in each word that trembled upon her lips. It was her brilliant mind that threw a charming halo around her person, and imparted dignity to its graceful contour.

Blanche Lovel was an orphan from childhood; she had never known the caresses of loving parents. Miles Howard had been the sole companion of her childhood's sports; he was the unreluctant recipient of her joys, and the willing participant in all her sorrows. In their extreme youth they had strolled together upon the wild and luxuriant bank of the Potomac, weaving bright fancies for each other's future, and roamed amid the fragrant buds and blossoms of the fields, culling gay flowers to bind each other's brows; and as the age of maturity advanced upon them, the young buds of love soon expanded into the full-blown flower.

But, alas! the cup of their happiness, once filled to the brim, was destined to be dashed with dregs. When she entered the cottage a smile of joy illumined her sweet features, and she threw herself upon the manly bosom of Miles, exclaiming:

“Welcome back, dear Miles!—welcome back to your friends, whose light and happiness you are!”

“Thank you, dearest Blanche,” Miles replied, pressing her rapturously to his heart. “If anything could enhance the delight I experience at beholding you all again it would be your kind salutation.”



"You are all goodness, dear Miles, and none other than one possessed of your noble heart would have voluntarily incurred the danger of visiting us at this time. Accept"—

"Nay, mine own beloved Blanche, no thanks. Duty required the visit, and when duty calls, Miles Howard is not one to shrink back affrighted. Danger is suspended over this peaceful settlement, and all who dwell within its borders. The tomahawk and scalping knife of the savage are prepared for their bloody offices; his fierce war-whoop is even now echoing along the neighboring mountains. You must fly from this place like a frightened deer, or you will inevitably fall into the hands of designing men, such as will have the management of the expedition contemplated against the inhabitants of the settlement. Lieutenant Harbison and Simon Girty are the ostensible leaders, and God in Heaven only can prescribe limits to the exercise of their cruel passions."

At mention of Harbison's name, Blanche's fair form trembled with apprehension, and a foreboding of evil, amounting almost to an absolute conviction, flashed across her mind.

Lieutenant John Harbison, a well-known French partizan, was a native of the Old Dominions. In 1749, he migrated, with a near relative, to Fort Du Quesne, and when the seven years' war between the English and the French, for the empire of the great valley of the Ohio, extended its desolating reign over that vast region of country, like a traitorous wretch, he linked himself to the uncertain fortunes of his natural enemy. They honored him with a lieutenant's commission, and then the natural licentiousness of his disposition, and his inhuman thirst for blood, were exercised with unrestrained indulgence.

"Never, perhaps, was a combination of more ferocious and fiend-like qualities concentrated within the same individual. There was nothing in the whole catalogue of human depravity to which he would not stoop, to secure the accomplishment of his nefarious designs.

He had beheld Blanche Lovel, when the young buds of



her beauty had first begun to develop themselves, and each petal that expanded into light was a new incentive to the fierce passions of his soul. For a time he endeavored to restrain them, but, like the impetuous torrent that dashes down the mountain's rugged breast, they turned aside every impediment in their resistless career. Then it was that he submitted to their wild government, and bowed, in enthusiastic admiration, at the shrine of their divinity. He prostrated himself at her feet, and earnestly and piteously invoked a requital of his love, that one ray of brightness might be shed over the gloom of his existence. But she rejected his overtures, kindly but firmly; told him that her affections were irrevocably another's, and that under no circumstances whatever, could she consent to break her plighted troth, and form an alliance with one whom she did not and could not love.

Unaccustomed to be thwarted in any of his desires, he could not silently brook this mortifying repulse. All the extreme malignity of his nature seemed quickened into existence at once, and, in a tone of ill-suppressed rage, he ventured every epithet of abuse upon the innocent object of his anger. He solemnly asseverated that she, proud and haughty as she had appeared to him, should be his; if not by the gentle means of persuasion, then by the force ones of compulsion.

His agency in the contemplated incursion was mainly attributable to sinister motives. He knew that it would afford him a fair opportunity to redeem his oath, and realize his brightest earthly hopes, by leading the beautiful object of his unhallowed adoration into captivity, and compelling her to become his bride, or force her to submit to a fate a thousand times more horrible and excruciating than even death itself. In forming his plans, he experienced not the slightest compunction of conscience. Instead of the will being guided by conscience, conscience, as is frequently the case, was forced to submit to the guidance of the will.

Blanche's agitation lasted but a moment. Disengaging herself from the embrace of Miles, she informed him, whilst



a serene smile lit up her intelligent features, of the cause of her apprehension.

"Fear not," replied Miles; "that oath shall perjure his soul. You shall be effectually protected. Innocence is an invincible safeguard, and whilst panoplied in its bright armor, you will be secure from molestation. Over such, dear Blanche, God's protecting arm is always suspended. And, mine own, my beloved Blanche, I, and the balance of your friends, will not desert you; or, if they do, may God desert them."

As he ceased speaking he folded the sweet girl, all blushing, to his heart, and was about impressing the first warm and generous kiss of love upon her lips, when the ungainly form of Ebony, with a good-natured smile playing about the lineaments of his countenance, darkened the doorway.

Ebony was a privileged character, as old and faithful servants usually are, going and coming when and where he listed, without molestation. His intrusion, therefore, at this inauspicious moment, was accounted amongst his rightful prerogatives, and passed off with a quiet remark from Miles, who had taken the old negro into special favor.

"Ah! Eb., you old sinner, have you just come to bid me welcome?"

"Gorry Mighty, massa, dis ole darkey hab so much to do, dese times, he can hardly find time to say how-de-do. But I's proper glad to see my young massa hab sich good color, and look so well. Missa Blanche, too, her lubly cheek am red as the rose—yah, yah, yah!"

"Hush, you old scamp!" exclaimed Blanche, good-humoredly, endeavoring to conceal the blushes suffusing her cheeks with crimson, "or I'll show you the outside of the door."

"Bless de Lord, missa, no defence, no defence; dis ole nigger didn't mean no defence!"

As Eb. delivered this learned apology, his huge mouth was distended from ear to ear, displaying two rows of shark-like teeth, white as ivory; and he could scarcely



suppress another uproarious yah! yah! yah! that struggled hard to free itself from his capacious jaws.

"Well, Ebony," inquired Miles, "how does the world use you? Can you dance Juba with as many extra flourishes as usual?"

"De world am gwien hard wid Ebony. I's gitten' old, and I sometimes habs a romantic 'jection in dis shoulder, and my back aches terrible before a storm; but, bless de Lord, I habs to grin and bear it. 'Casionally I rubs it wid 'possum fat, and it hab great effect to obflusticate de ontensity ob de pain. But I'se still hard to beat on de double-shuffle-cut-de-pigeon-wing-juber, wid de variations."

And, suiting the action to the word, the old scamp began to swing his incongruous body to and fro, preparatory to showing off with a grand flourish. Then, bounding up with considerable agility, he commenced a double-shuffle in the real ancient style, beating his breast, hips and thighs, in the mean time, with his hands, to keep the requisite time. Miles understood the old fellow's besetting sin, and, handing him a small piece of coin, he quickly disappeared, bowing, and scraping, and grinning with the affected politeness of a French dancing-master; and, striking up a tune, he sung:

"Oh! walk jaw-bone, and tarker, too,  
For I'se de child what can go through,  
Scratch de gravel, cut the pigeon's wing;  
Oh! I'se de boy to dance and sing."

As the day advanced, the fears of Miles and Blanche subsided, and the threatening danger was forgotten in the fascination of each other's society, and in recalling the associations that cluster, like bright halos, around the past, when youth, with its fond hopes, its sweet dreams, and its glorious anticipations, had dawned so brightly upon them—when life was one uninterrupted scene of golden sunshine and gay bowers, silver lakes, and bright and sparkling cascades. Alas! that it should ever be trans-



formed, as it too frequently is, into the dreary mirage of the desert! But man is continually prone to error. He is the creature of his habits. They rule him with a rod of iron; they bind him with fetters of brass; he cannot extricate himself from their influence, how baneful soever they may be. He has not the power, if he possessed the will; and, as a consequence, the *ideal*, with its beauties, is deposed, and stern *reality* usurps the throne.

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#### CHAPTER IV.

——— “I will have vengeance!  
I'll crush thy swelling pride! I'll sting thy vaunting!  
I'll do a deed of blood!” *Joanna Baillie.*

“But ah! those dreadful yells, what soul can hear,  
That owns a carcass, and not quake with fear.”

*Cowper.*

About three leagues west of Guy Lovel's cottage, up the Potomac, there is a deep ravine, opening as you advance towards the main valley, and running far back into the heart of Dan's Mountain. At the period of which I write, it was overhung with the drooping branches of the hemlock, interwoven with masses of thick, clustering vines, rendering it almost impervious to the eye. A short distance up the dismal gorge, Lieutenant Harbison, and the notorious renegade, Simon Girty, with about fifty savage warriors were encamped. But not a sound broke in upon the death-like tranquility that prevailed over it. They scarcely seemed to breathe, so perfect was the silence.

All, save one, seemed locked in profound slumber. This personage wore the uniform of the French army. His person was tall and well-proportioned; his features were regularly chiselled, and might have been considered eminently handsome, but for the malignant scowl that now



and then swept over the fair face of nature, excluding the glorious sunlight of heaven. He was seated on a log, before a handful of live coals, apparently engaged in the solution of some profound, metaphysical subtlety. At last he rose up, drew a glittering scalping-knife from its sheath, and felt its keen edge. Then thrusting it back into its scabbard, he wildly exclaimed, while an expression of deadliest hatred settled upon his features:

“You thought I would submit to this disgraceful repulse without a murmur. But never, Blanche Lovel—never will I do it. My injured honor calls loudly for revenge. It is sweet, my blood thirsts for it, and, by the eternal Heavens, I’ll have it. My oath—ah, curse the oath! Yet, it must be so; my oath demands. And on to-morrow—but then I may not survive to-morrow’s work—yet on to-morrow I will return that look of bitter scorn with ten-fold interest. Then my hour of triumph will have arrived. But, a malediction on this horrible presentiment. And yet, it cannot be! But why do I think of death? I am still in all the vigor of manhood; my body is capable of endurance. It is true, it has been subjected to all manner of hardships; but that, instead of enervating the muscles, has inured them to privations and fatigue. And yet, something—something here, here in my feverish brain—admonishes me that I will, that I must soon become a prey to the King of Terrors. The ghastly monster, with its hideously-distorted features—his long and disheveled locks, matted and clotted with human gore; his eye-balls gleaming like coals of fire, and his fleshless bones whitened and blanched by time—rises up in naked deformity before me. It mocks me with its horrid laugh, and gnashes its teeth in mortal hatred. Avaunt, thou cruel monster! Hence! Away! Leave me! Ah! it was but a wayward fancy!—an ignis-fatuus of the mind!—a mental hallucination of the moment! But why these painful thoughts, rushing with maddening fury through my brain? What do they foreshadow? Can they be the forerunners of that fatal messenger? No, no; I cannot die yet! Days, long days of unbounded happiness are still



before me. Blanche will—must, that's the word!—*must* be mine! If not willingly, then forcibly; yes, I repeat it, forcibly! That will be revenge, indeed—revenge as sweet as the fabled manna of heaven to the dwellers in the wilderness. And as for Miles Howard—my hated rival—who has supplanted me in the affections of that girl, may all the accumulated maledictions of hell be thundered against me and mine if I do not blot him from existence!”

His soliloquy completed, he buckled on his sword, thrust a brace of pistols beneath his belt, and, rousing the savages from their slumbers, he and Girty, with their countenances besmeared with war-paint, like the Indians, hastily left the camp.

The night was one of consummate beauty. The soft, liquid radiance of the moon shone brightly on leaf and shrub, and rendered the outlines of the distant mountains clear and distinct. Their granite-crowned summits gleamed in the light, like stupendous glaciers of snow; and far away toward the east, where nobly rears its lofty cone a thousand feet above the surrounding plain, the Potomac appeared like an immense belt of silver, stretching away as far as the eye could follow its meanderings. Up toward the zenith nothing was seen but the resplendant azure of the sky, with here and there a bright star glittering, like a celestial sentinel, on the blue battlements of heaven; whilst, toward the west, just above the horizon, a few gauze-like clouds floated across the disks of the stars in that direction, like a transparent veil across the face of a bright, joyous and truthful woman. A refreshing breeze occasionally stirred the crisped foliage of the trees, and every now and then the night-hawk's melancholy scream, or the distant hooting of the owl, swelled upon the ear; then all would relapse again into deep quietude.

Harbison, after leaving the camp, shaped his course down the gorge, toward its mouth. He threaded the forest with a confident step, apparently unconscious of danger, but wholly intent upon the accomplishment of his well-laid plans. Unscrupulous in his designs, on all previous occasions, he was wary and circumspect in the ex-



treme, in carrying them out; but now, his usual precaution was abandoned. A spell seemed to be upon him. An irresistible destiny summoned him forward, and he willingly obeyed its fatal behests. How many are thus deluded in this world, whilst following the bent of their inclinations! They do not behold the awful precipice upon which they stand, until it is too late to recede. Oh! when will men divest themselves of their wilful blindness, and stand out in the original light in which the Deity intended they should walk.

After arriving at the mouth of the gorge, Harbison and his coadjutor turned toward the east, where a few streaks of reddish-grey light began to show themselves along the eastern horizon. They expanded every moment, until the whole heavens were clothed with imperial purple, then changed into crimson, then entirely disappeared, and a rich rush of golden sunlight tinged the tops of the hills, and gradually descended along their slopes, down into the intervening valleys. At this moment a hundred brilliant-plumaged choristers sent forth their morning hymns in a lay of exquisite melody; but, as if dreading the approach of some horrid calamity, they ceased their singing as suddenly as they had commenced, and flew away, on rapid wings, into the impenetrable mazes of the forest. But totally oblivious, at first, of surrounding indications, Harbison glided along with rapid strides. Suz-up discovered him in the vicinity of Guy Lovel's cottage. A holy quiet reigned over the valley; not a sound disturbed the unbroken solitude. To Harbison this, at length, seemed mysterious. A few weeks previous, all there was life and animation; the joyous birds caroled sweetly amid the wild luxuriance of the trees, and the song of the happy husbandman ascended like an anthem of praise unto God for his glorious blessings. Now the reverse of this picture was true. This was profoundly mysterious. The more he thought, the more he became perplexed. Could it be that his designs were suspected? And yet that seemed improbable. He had never revealed them to mortal man, nor was mortal man endowed with power to penetrate the



depths of his unscrupulous soul, and read its dark secrets. He progressed step by step in the solution of the problem thus unexpectedly sprung upon him, until the incongruous thoughts of the previous night came rushing back over his guilty soul, accompanied by the same horrible presentiment of death. To the wicked and depraved, how dreadful must be the consciousness of approaching dissolution, when the material frame shall be resolved into its primitive elements, and the immortal soul, like the trembling dove of the patriarch, shall fly away and nestle in the bosom of Him who gave it! Even to the pious and the good the grave is full of terror; but to him who has perpetrated dark deeds, and, in the plenitude of his malignant spirit, wantonly sacrificed human life, to descend into its cold embrace, with God's bitterest maledictions upon his head, it must be awful in the extreme. Punishment that must be as everlasting in its duration as the heavens themselves, must be his portion. And there can be no hope of escape. He must endure its excruciating torments forevermore.

Harbison could not divest himself of the painful consciousness that death was about to lay its fatal hand upon him. Every effort to thrust it from his mind caused it to cling to it with greater tenacity. At last a feeling of utter despair began to creep over him. His powerful frame became fearfully agitated; his cheeks lost their florid hue; his lips wore a livid complexion; his eyes glittered like those of a venomous reptile, and the blue veins were distended like whip-cord on his contracted brow. The muscles of his countenance worked spasmodically, and the white foam gathered about his purple lips like flakes of driven snow. The convulsion was but momentary, however; by a powerful effort he recovered, and, with a howl of desperation that sounded, amid the sublime stillness of the morning, like a voice issuing from the empire of the dead, he pronounced the emphatic word—"Forward!" Uttering a yell that forced the blood back in freezing currents to the heart, the savages, headed by their ferocious and vindictive chief, Wy-ing-wa-ha, or Hard-Heart, rushed in



a body to the front entrance of the cottage. But the inmates, amongst whom were several backwoodsmen, having observed their approach, barred the door, and their efforts to gain ingress at the first onset proved abortive. Nothing daunted, however, Harbison, being as wily as he was ferocious and blood-thirsty, bethought him of an expedient.

"Ho! there, within!" he shouted, with ill-suppressed rage, "will you bar your door against friends, come to apprise you of approaching danger?"

The only reply was the sharp report of a rifle; and one of the savages, uttering a wild cry, and bounding up in the air like a wounded stag, fell dead at his feet. A fierce howl of revenge followed, and then another shrill crack vibrated through the still air, succeeded by the fall of another savage, and a yell of intense satisfaction from the thick lips of old Ebony. He had stationed himself in an adjacent cabin, and, catching up an old blunderbuss, he hurled its contents amongst the assailants with mathematical precision. Seeing the effects of his skill, in the excess of his delight, he performed a regular set-to upon the puncheon-floor. After finishing his laughable amusement, he shouted, in tones of defiance, blended with exuberant delight:

"Wake, snakes, and come at me. I'se a regular-built nigger—half-hoss, half-alligator, tipped wid de wild-cat, and touched wid de painter; and anybody dat strikes dis chile, had better strike de rock ob ages. Gorra Mighty, but if dem dare-debils of old Belzebub don't go off in a jiffy from dese here premises in double quick time, dey'll raise the dauder of dis chicken. Den let 'um look to 'um-selves; 'case I ain't gwine to be 'sponsible for dar hides. As I's a sinner, dare's dat Injin what I jist knock down crawlin' away in de bushes. Now I'se gwine to hab his top-knot sure's a gun."

He threw open the door; but, instead of free egress, he bolted into the midst of half-a-dozen infuriated savages. Quick as thought they hurled the old fellow to the earth, struggling like a giant to free himself from their herculean



grasp, where they effectually bound him upon his back. But, if they deprived him of the power of locomotion, they could not check the torrent of disparaging epithets that flowed from his tongue.

“Debils ob hell, let dis chile loose once, and if I doesn’t gub you de oudasionist whollop in’ dat you ever saw, my name’s not Ebony! Yes, you can flourish de knife and de tomahawk now, ’case you know I’s helpless, wid dese nasty things ’bout my legs and arms, but jist undo ’um, you good-for-nothin’ cowards, and dis here is de nigger what’ll skin you alive, you imps ob de debil! If I does git loose, I’ll pray my Heavenly Fadder dat all ob de ghosts ob de ’arth may fall on you, and tear you to pieces wid dar sharp claws, you infarnal hounds ob Old Nick!”

But old Eb.’s strain of bragadocia proved utterly abortive. If it was comprehended by his ruthless captor’s, it was passed unheeded. They had secured him beyond the possibility of escape; and after regarding him a moment with feelings in which triumph and hatred were strangely mingled, they moved away with steps as majestic as those of an eastern emperor, to participate in another scene, where their ferocious love of battle could be glutted to satiety. They would have terminated the existence of the old negro at once, but they desired a victim, first, for the gauntlet, and then for the fire and the stake. Their savage spirits gloried, in exhibitions of this nature, and they could behold the writhings of the body of the doomed wretch under the merciless torments, and listen to the lamentations of his spirit, with fiendish delight.

Anticipating an easy conquest, Harbison could not silently brook such determined resistance. All the fierce, ungovernable passions of his nature were roused into fury. They gleamed forth in every lineament of his countenance, in the frightful contortions of his frame, and in the multitude of hoarse words that rushed, like a torrent, through his livid lips.

“An axe! an axe!” he shouted, “to batter in the door! By the God who made me, every soul shall per-



ish, and their scalps shall dangle as bloody trophies at the girdles of my red brethren! Such insolence shall not pass with impunity."

The door, under the vigorous blows of the axeman, soon began to give way, and directly swung back, with a creak, upon its iron hinges, and Harbison, furious with passion, shouted to his co-partners in deeds of blood to follow. All rushed in pell-mell. This gave to the besieged a great advantage; and being well-tutored in border warfare, they plied their deadly rifles with fearful effect. But the savages maintained their stand with obstinate perseverance. Encouraged by the example of their blood-thirsty leaders, they fought with the desperation of demons. Their wild war-whoop, blended with the incessant discharge of fire-arms, and the loud groans of the wounded and dying, was replete with the wildest horror. But the little band of heroes prolonged the contest with unabated zeal. To them there was a glorious triumph even in death. The horrid stake and the fagot followed close on the heels of captivity, in those days, and rather than yield to their obdurate-hearted foemen, they would prolong the combat whilst life animated their bodies, and then die, like genuine heroes, with arms in their hands.

Blanche Lovel, at the commencement of the battle, shut herself up in one of the rear rooms of the cottage, where she remained during its early stages, a prey to the most poignant agony, because totally ignorant of the fate of those whom she cherished far more than life. Once she was tempted to break from her self-imposed imprisonment, and ascertain, if possible, their probable destiny; but the continuous roar of fire-arms, and the demoniac yells of the savages, deterred her. She wrung her hands until the crimson blood started from the ends of her fingers, and low sobs of anguish burst continually from her lips. At length her situation became one of extreme peril. In the beginning of the onset the savages had applied the torch of the incendiary to the house, and the large volumes of flame and smoke rushing into the room threatened instant suffocation. There was but one alternative remaining



Death was behind, and hope, at least, in front. Its sweet voice nerved her for the step. She sprang to the door, threw it open, and bounded into the midst of the combatants. Harbison made an effort to reach her; but Miles Howard, who was the very life and soul of his company, comprehended his object, and bounded forward with great agility to defeat the movement. In this, unfortunately, he was not successful. Wy-ing-wa-ha, or Hard Heart, uttering his wild war-cry in formidable tones, rushed to the aid of Harbison, and, dealing Miles a tremendous blow with his ponderous war-club, laid him senseless and bleeding on the floor. Then the work of death commenced with accumulated ferocity. At a gesture from their exulting leaders, the savages now rushed forward with their horrid yells, their begrimmed and blackened countenances gleaming with concentrated fury, their eyes glittering with the subtle light of demons, and their tomahawks and scalping knives waving above their heads like destructive meteors. The whites made a gallant stand, and, after a manly struggle, being overpowered by numbers, they perished. Not one of their number seemingly remained alive to recount their mournful fate, save Blanche Lovel. They deserved a nobler destiny. The scalps were instantly ripped from the heads of the unfortunate victims, and suspended at the girdles of the ruthless savages.

Human nature shudders at the recital of deeds so barbarous and fiend-like, but, alas! they were but the mournful prelude to the terrible scenes that were unfolding themselves in other parts of the valley. The dark passions of men were quickened into life, and nothing could appease them but rivers of human blood.

Harbison now gazed upon the ruins he had made; but instead of being scourged by compunctions of conscience, he gloried in the desolation he had wrought. His dastardly spirit could not conceive a more exalted triumph. His wishes and ambition were alike gratified. He had obtained possession of the beautiful object of his desires, and exterminated the last feeble remnant of her family; and though the bleeding image of the grey-haired sire rose



up, in the majesty of his age, to the mind of the unrelenting murderer, to implore compassion for the child of his son, it awoke no chord of mercy in his indurated soul. His features were expressive of no other emotion than that of the present exultation which they wore, until he disappeared with his lovely captive, guarded like a criminal, into the intervening forest.

When Ebony's limbs were released from bondage, he rose from his recumbent position, and drawing his incongruous frame up, he gazed around him with a troubled and mournful look, and his honest features gradually assumed an expression of profound grief. A tear started from the old man's eye, perhaps the first he had shed for years, and ran slowly down his furrowed cheeks.

He loved his old master with a warm affection, and he knew that love had been reciprocated with the kindest feelings. They had been boys together, and had shared each other's joys and sorrows; but the deep silence that brooded over the dwelling, interrupted at intervals only by the hissing and crackling of the flames, told his heart that his kind master was numbered among the victims that day immolated on the altar of savage animosity. He gazed a moment upon the smoking ruin, and then throwing his arms aloft, his lips, for an instant, were seen to move, when he exclaimed, whilst a gleam of inextinguishable hatred passed over the dark lineaments of his countenance:

"I solemnly pray de Lord God ob Hosts dat the vengeance ob Heaben may come down on de heads ob dese marciless wretches!"

Then, bowing his head upon his breast, at a motion from his captors, he disappeared from sight.

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## CHAPTER V.

———A while she stood,  
Transformed by grief to marble, and appeared  
Her own pale monument; but when she breathed  
The secret anguish of her wounded soul,  
So mourning were the plaints, they would have soothed  
The stooping falcon to suspend his flight,  
And spare his morning prey. *Fenton's Marianne.*

It is deeply interesting, once in a while to turn aside from the contemplation of the bloody scenes of the present, with its political rivalries, its social jealousies, its pompous parade, its conflicts and its passions, and gaze through the long vista of time into the dim, sepulchral light of elder years. As memory's talismanic power rolls back the dark curtain of forgetfulness, the dim, shadowy images of things that were rise up lifelike before us. We behold the scenes in which our fathers moved and acted, those iron men of an iron age, before the might of whose advancing footsteps all else was made to recede, passing in grand review before us. We forget the present; we see no promise in the majestic coming of events; the great, restless, living human herd, pressing onward heedlessly over the ashes of the glorious dead, are to us as if they had never existed; we are lost amid the mighty ruins of the past. A primeval wilderness, untouched by the woodman's axe, peopled by roving bands of barbarians and savage beasts of prey; its depths but partially explored; its great mineral wealth, yet undeveloped, slumbering in the bowels of the earth, is spread out before the enchanted gaze. Here and there, an humble log-cabin rears itself in the sublime waste, its blue smoke ascending in spiral wreaths above the tall timber, imparting an appearance of



life to the dull monotony of the wilderness. In front of the door sits its owner, a hardy pioneer, with his faithful dog, the sole companion of his solitude, by his side, and the murderous rifle lying across his lap. Anon, the scene changes. The solitude of the wilderness is broken by the long, fierce, wild war-whoop of the savage, and the crack of the merciless rifle echoes and re-echoes through its mighty deep. On such occasions, we grasp the pen, and, with feeble hand, attempt to trace the picture as it rises. It affords us pleasure, if we receive no other or more substantial recompense; besides, time flies swiftly, and the interesting traditions our fathers bequeathed to us must soon disappear amid the shadows of the past, unless an effort is made to preserve them. Those more competent have hitherto neglected the task; and, as it behooves some one to make an effort to embody, in some tangible shape, the fleeting images as they pass, we have bowed ourselves to the undertaking, how trembling soever our fingers may appear.

Humbly praying forgiveness for this digression, we will now return to our narrative.

In the last chapter we beheld Harbison and his savage, though less vindictive allies, disappear into the intricacies of the forest with their captives, and we will now follow, or rather accompany them on their trail. Leaving the blazing cottage, they shaped their course directly northwest, over Wills Mountain and the intervening valleys, so as to strike what is now known as Braddock's Run. After arriving at the banks of this secluded stream they paused for consultation. Blanche, completely horror-stricken at what she had beheld, and firmly convinced that her dear old grandfather and Miles Howard were numbered among the slain, raved incessantly, like a maniac. She besought Harbison, in piteous tones, to kill her at once, and thus terminate her intense wretchedness; but his indurated soul was absolutely impervious to an attribute so divine as that of mercy, and he only uttered a scornful laugh in reply. He stood listening to the earnest prayers of the unfortunate captive, with the same immobility of counte-



nance that a serpent would assume whilst coiling itself in the path to dart its poisonous fangs into the flesh of the unwary traveler. The infusion of the subtle fluid of a reptile into the veins causes almost instant death, when the suffering terminates; but the vengeance which he contemplated, although attended with equal agony to the sensitive soul, produces a result not less fatal, but more lingering and protracted. His solemn asseveration that she should be his, if not by her own free election, then by compulsion, was recorded in burning characters upon his soul, and he felt himself religiously bound to effectuate its human import, now that he had obtained possession of her person.

"No, no, sweet Blanche," he at length remarked, with a mock seriousness, "it would not do to murder a creature so divinely fair, I shall take you under my special guardianship, as my own peculiar and individual property. You are mine by an indisputable, legal right, the right of conquest; for you will recollect," and his countenance glowed with a diabolical expression, "you will recollect that the spoils belong to him who achieves the victory, and a delightful home I have prepared for you, too. Away on the beautiful banks of the Ohio, whose gentle ripplings sound like sweetest music to the ear, is your future dwelling place. You will appreciate it dearly for its exquisite and romantic charms. And then I—yes, I, Blanche Lovel, I, your humble admirer, whom you discarded with scorn and contempt, I will be there *always* to point out its glorious beauties. That will be too much happiness for one poor mortal, and be assured that I fully appreciate the sacrifice you are making in accompanying me. But it will promote *my* pleasure, and a happy time we'll have together, unless your dear, betrothed husband, on whom you have thrown away the rich treasures of affection, should come to mar our pleasure. But, dear Blanche, do not apprehend any danger of that kind. Ha, ha, ha!"

"Fiend of darkness!" exclaimed Blanche, elevating her queenly form to its full height, and regarding him for



a moment with a look of supreme contempt, whilst a blush of indignation overspread her lovely features; "exult while you may over your ignominious and bloody triumph; exult that you hold me, a defenceless girl, in bondage, whose kindred your malicious passions doomed to destruction; but recollect, John Harbison, recollect in time, that there is above us an omnipotent and an avenging God, who will hold you to strict accountability for the deeds this day committed."

"That, Blanche Lovel, is all mere gammon."

"No, sir, it is true. The venerable hairs of my poor old grandfather, the last remaining remnant of my once numerous ancestry," continued Blanche, whilst a flood of scalding tears followed each other down her cheeks, "cried aloud for vengeance when you struck him down at your feet. Your ruthless and unsparing hand is crimsoned with his life-blood, and over your head hangs an awful responsibility."

"Very true," replied Harbison, "I did knock the old dotard's brains out; but I assumed, at the same time, all the attendant responsibilities, every one of them."

"Impious wretch! Have you heard of that immutable law of God which says: 'Whoso sheddeth blood, his blood by man shall be shed?'"

"Oh, frequently, my fairest nymph, and it answers admirably as a rule of conduct for those who subscribe to its divine origin; but I am not one of that credulous number."

"Dare you, sir, deny the authenticity of that holy book, and, in the presence of God himself, affirm that his revelations are base forgeries?"

"Permit me," answered Harbison, evasively, "to say, that I see nothing around me but lofty mountains, a pathless wilderness and the blue sky above. The presence of the being you speak of is not here, unless my eye-sight fails me."

"God, sir, is omnipresent, and his transcendent power and glory is written in characters of living beauty upon the dark mantle of night; is displayed in the grandeur and



sublimity of the storm-cloud, and in the luxuriant calm of the sunshine. He dwells on the mountain's lofty crest, and sits in the valley beside the rushing stream. His vengeance on those who wantonly transgress His laws, is as terrible as His love is unmeasured, unbounded and free"—

"Why, I declare, the girl is becoming inspired."

"It is the inspiration of truth. In that solemn hour, when God's flaming sword shall be suspended over your head, and death, with all its many terrors, shall approach to lay its fatal hand upon you, you will feel its irresistible force, and lament, when it is too late, your scoffings and your obstinate incredulity. You will then invoke His divine aid to rescue you from that eternal perdition to which you are now hastening with rapid strides."

Harbison listened to these words of solemn import with troubled aspect. They seemed to be uttered with a spirit of prophecy, and as their full meaning was impressed upon his mind, all the dark deeds of his former life seemed to rise up with damning distinctness, before his excited faculties. In the excitement of the morning, he had entirely forgotten his unwelcome forebodings; but, at the mention of the word *death*, they rushed back upon his guilty soul with increased violence. An unmeaning stare settled upon his distorted features, and he trembled with apprehension in every fibre of his body. His brow became fearfully contracted; his eyes gleamed with a wild light; an unnatural pallor overspread his countenance, and the blue lips were forcibly drawn back, exposing his teeth, through which the white foam oozed out, and gathered in large flakes about the distorted mouth. He writhed under the sting of conscience, like a wounded reptile, and fairly hissed between his teeth the words—"Death! death! away, thou monster of hell! Avaunt! I owe no fellowship to such an accursed image as thine."

He struggled hard, however, with his emotions, and soon suppressed them. Then, casting a glance of mingled hatred and respect toward the high-souled girl, he walked



away, as if nothing unusual had occurred, and held a brief consultation with the savages.

Blanche gazed after the retreating figure, and crossing her hands devoutly upon her breast, and raising her dark, lustrous eyes to Heaven, she murmured inaudibly: "'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord."

The same train of thought seemed to be running in the mind of old Ebony, and when Harbison was out of hearing, he exclaimed aloud:

"Bless de Lord, de prayers of my heart, have been answered. De wengence of Heaben is fallin' upon dat cruel man's head. Him bad man, and his heart am black as de night. But, young Missa, our good Massa above will not let the willian hurt a hair ob your lubly head. I'll keep a sharp eye on him, and if I find he's gwien to hurt you, I'll rumflusticate him, till he can't see."

"No, Ebony," said Blanche, "you must not molest him; it would aggravate his cruelty. I place my trust in a higher power than man's, with implicit confidence; yet I have strong hopes that friends will follow and rescue us from this galling captivity. Your interference would do no good; but, on the contrary, might have a tendency to put his revengeful passions into play, and we alone would be the sufferers."

"Dat's de truff, Missa; but when I fine he's gwien to hurt you, dis ole nigger ain't gwien to stand by and do nuffen. I must lay dis hand upon him, if I dies for it, or ole Massa's murdered ghost would rise up to curse me."

This allusion to her old grandfather forced the tears from Blanche's eyes. She loved him with the fond affection of a daughter, and now that he was no more, that affection clung to his memory as the ivy clings to the girdled oak, protecting its decaying trunk from the storms of heaven.

When Harbison drew near the group of savages, he said:

"Wy-ing-wa-ha is the wisest chief of the Hurons. There are no lies in his heart, and his tongue never travels



over a crooked path. Can he tell when the enemies of the Huron will be on his trail?"

"My white brother does not speak with a forked tongue. Wy-ing-wa-ha is wise, and falsehood does not live in his heart. Before the song of the nightingale is heard, the wolf will follow the scent of the ou-pa-a-tan-ga.\* We must start on the home-path, and keep the eye close to the beams of the kee-shes-wa,† where he sinks behind the western hills. The trail must be secret as the flight of the bird through the air, or the waw-a-law-wa-ha‡ will find it."

"Wy-ing-wa-ha is a great warrior. His counsel is good, and his white brother is thankful. But can the cunning of Hard-Heart throw the long-knives on the wrong scent?"

"Wy-ing-wa-ha is a serpent in cunning. He will throw dirt in the eyes of the pale-face."

To effect their object, the Huron chief determined that the band should be divided into two parties, and each should separate and pursue a different route, to mislead pursuers. There were still about forty savages in the party, one of whom, with Simon Girty as their leader, now plunged into the trackless forest, leaving a broad trail behind, to attract attention. The remaining savages, with their captives, then stepped carefully into the stream, and, following its meanderings, were soon lost to view in the depths of the forest.

\* The Elk.

† The Sun.

‡ Scenting Fox.

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## CHAPTER VI.

Hark! what is that—or who, at such a moment?

*Marino Faliero.*

My soul is up in arms, my injured honor,  
Impatient of the wrong, call for revenge.—*Rowe.*

We are admonished of the necessity of returning to Guy Lovel's cottage, not for the purpose of reading a homily upon the sanguinary scene there enacted, in order that man may behold, with more horrible distinctness, the working of his depraved spirit, but to introduce additional *dramatis personae* upon the bloody drama we have been endeavoring to portray. To depict a scene, and then point out the moral to the intelligent reader, is superfluous. He should adduce his own moral from the premises, and make an application best suited to his own peculiar temperament. We desire it to be emphatically understood, that we do not write alone to inculcate great philosophical truths or wholesome morals. We have another aim. We merely desire to illustrate the occurrences of other days, and speak of those who have long since played their parts upon the great theater of human life, and are now gone where neither the censure or praise of the living can affect them. Their history and mode of life, their trials, their perils and their escapes, will attract more of our attention, in our humble way, than anything else.

After Harbison and his congenial spirits had disappeared into the intricacies of the woods, three individuals glided from a thick undergrowth of bushes on the opposite side of the forest, and hastened toward the cottage.

Two of them appeared somewhat beyond the prime of life.



Their unshorn beards, and the few locks of long, wiry hair that escaped from their well-worn, coon-skin caps, were sprinkled with flakes of snow, indicating advanced life. But their muscular forms, and free, round limbs, still denoted the presence of great physical strength and activity, combined with endurance. They were backwoodsmen of the genuine stamp, as the eccentricity of their dresses fully demonstrated. Each wore a hunting-shirt of dressed deer-skin, ornamented with a superabundance of gaudy-colored fringes, and leggins and moccasins of the same material. Each carried a long rifle across his shoulder, and in the belt of a wampum, encircling their waists, were suspended a tomahawk and scalping-knife. Exposure to the rude blasts of winter, and the scorching rays of the sun in summer, had embrowned their features, the prevailing expression of which, when in repose, indicated great kindness of heart. The elder and less muscular of the two is our noble-hearted old friend, David Thompson, and the latter, the reader will recognize as the indefatigable forester, Daniel Browning. On a former occasion, they accompanied us through scenes of war and bloodshed; through their instrumentality those in peril were rescued, and they have again volunteered, with generous enthusiasm, in another enterprise, equally difficult of accomplishment, and far more perilous.

The third was one of the noblest specimens of an Indian warrior that ever figured in the annals of savage warfare. His person was tall, commanding and symmetrical in its proportions as a reed. He was in the early vigor of manhood, and moved with supreme grace and dignity. Though uncouth in itself, his dress set off his handsome person to great advantage. This Indian was the celebrated Mingo Chief, Logan, called by the tribe to which he belonged, Sah-gah-jute, or Short Dress. His heart was the dwelling-place of the noblest impulses of our nature. He never hesitated as to the proper course for him to pursue, when a friend needed assistance. He was always ready to counsel, and, if necessity required it, to strike a vigorous blow in defense of humanity. The side of the weaker



party was Logan's side. Many interesting legends are extant of his brilliant feats in arms. His eye never failed, whilst gleaming along the barrel of the rifle; and his hand never swerved from the right line in hurling the no less fatal tomahawk. On the present occasion, his scalp-lock was wreathed with the feathers of the eagle. On both sides of his countenance, alternate stripes of red and black paint were drawn, imparting to it a look of ferocity, which he never wore, unless he was on the war-path, and across his broad chest was a belt of wampum, curiously embroidered with beads and tufts of the gorgeous plumage of the paroquet, representing a couchant panther, the emblem of the Mingo tribe. To this belt was suspended the powder-horn and the pouch in which he carried his ammunition and jerked meat. His leggins were composed of doe-skin, the seams of which were decorated with porcupine quills, of many different colors, and small bits of deer hair, dyed with a rich crimson. His implements of war were similar to those of his white companions, except that, in addition to theirs, he carried a bow and a quiver of arrows. When he beheld the work of the Hurons, his eagle-eyes emitted flashes of intense hatred. They had, from time immemorial, been the inveterate and uncompromising foes of the Mingoes, and the noble chief embraced every opportunity to wreak his vengeance on their heads.

As the trio approached the house, old David Thompson remarked to his white companions:

"By the life o' me, friend David, I believe them thar greasy cusses hev murdered all on 'em, but old Eb. and the young gal! Leastwise, none on 'em seems to be stirrin.'"

"Well," answered Daniel Browning, "that's accordin' to the natur' o' them tharimps o' blackness. They hain't manners like a genuine white gentleman, they hain't. I tell you, David Thompson, them as lives in these here woods should always hev thar eyes skinned for the wild varmints, 'case why, they hain't no mercy. Now, that's jist the way with them thar 'tarnal blood-thirsty Hurons. They butcher white folks in cold blood, without one tar-



nation bit o' consarn, and chuckle over it as an all-fired great performance, they do. But if them chaps as did this dirty work don't hear the howl o' old Blazer," he continued, patting his long rifle, whilst his deep grey eyes sparkled with resentment—"but if them chaps as did this dirty work don't hear the howl o' old Blazer, atwixt this and to-morrow mornin'; then I'm a nigger, that's sartain, and my name's not Daniel Browning."

"Your hand on that," exclaimed David, extending his horny fist to his indignant companion, "for I am with you thar, with a heart that never flinches in time o' danger. Blanche Lovel's a nice little gal, and we'll rescue her from them thar Injins, or lose our scalps in the attempt. The redskins must be sarcumwented in thar diviltry, or the etarnal rascallions will take all afore 'em afore a great while. They must be sarcumwented. But what says our red brother? Will he push for the trail o' his enemies, the Hurons?"

"Will the panther run from the scent of blood?" interrogated the Chief, whilst every lineament of his swarthy countenance glowed with intense excitement. "Will the hawk fly from the sparrow, when he hears his song in the bush? Logan is for the war-path. The Hurons are dogs, and their scalps must hang in the wigwam. They tremble when they hear the war-whoop of Mingo. When he is on the war-path, Mowhinin\* follows to gnaw the flesh from the bones of his enemies."

"Logan's a great Chief," replied David Thompson; "his fame has followed the flight o' the pigeon from the frozen hills o' the North, to the green glades away at the mouth of the Mississippi, and from the East to the prairies of the West. When he *speaks*, the ears of Chiefs are open."

The Mingo made no audible reply, but with a solemn gesture pointed toward the blazing ruins. The quick ear of the Chief had detected an almost inaudible groan, and the three sprang forward together, rushed into the burn-

\* The Wolf.



ing building, the light and combustible material of which was becoming ignited throughout its whole extent, and in a moment re-appeared, bearing Miles Howard in their arms. The flames had not reached him in the short space of time he had remained upon the floor; and as soon as he was conveyed into the open air, he recovered. The war-club of Hard-Heart had only stunned him; fortunately, and by some means or other, he had escaped the scalping-knife of the savages, but whether designedly tradition saith not.

When Miles recovered, he shook his preservers cordially by the hand; but knowing how much they disdained expressions of gratitude, he refrained from avowing the thanks with which his heart was filled.

We will not endeavor to present an adequate portraiture of the deep feelings of anguish he manifested at the intelligence of Blanche's abduction. He knew Harbison to be an unrelenting and vindictive wretch, whose unscrupulous soul would willingly resort to the basest means to accomplish his designs, and his apprehensions for her safety were intense. If he succeeded in carrying her off, and if still persisting in her refusal to become his bride, she should accidentally give offence, Miles felt convinced that all the accumulated malignity of his nature would be hurled upon her devoted head. In a moment of passion, he might give her over to the fagot and stake—the most horrid and exquisite cruelty that savage ingenuity could devise. The thought was madness, yet he bore it with manly fortitude. A multiplicity of difficulties calls forth the latent energies of man's character. This remark is no less true in itself than in its application to Miles. He seemed undetermined, until his mind comprehended the dangers and difficulties of his position. Then his indecision was cast aside, like a useless garment, and in a moment he found himself equal to the emergency. He decided upon instantaneous pursuit; by that means alone could the evil consequences of Harbison's malicious passions be averted. When he announced his determination, a shout of concurrence greeted his words.



The shout had scarcely died away amongst the adjacent hills, until they were startled by the prolonged, and, to them, joyous war-cry of those celebrated mountain rangers, called the Red Caps, organized from the ranks of the frontiersmen by Colonel Thomas Cresap, for the protection of the inhabitants along the northern branch of the Potomac. Colonel Cresap is well known in the history of Maryland, for the conspicuous part he played in the Conojacular war—his adherence to the cause of Lord Baltimore has almost grown into a proverb—and also, for being the first man who possessed the hardihood to settle in the wilds of the Alleghany mountains. He was a man of indomitable energy. In his eightieth year, he conceived a project for exploring the country lying west of the Mississippi to the Pacific ocean, about the practicability of which he had no doubt, when death put an end to his plans. In his day he stood prominent for his consummate skill in Indian warfare. So notorious and distinctive was his courage, that the savages called him Eniswaha-nee, or Big Axe, to denote the character of his onsets.

The war-cry of the Red Caps was answered by Miles and his companions with a shout of intense delight. There were about fifteen in the company on the present occasion, and such a large and unexpected acquisition of strength was an infallible presage of success. Their dress was composed of a linsey-woolsey hunting shirt, dressed deer-skin leggins, and moccasins of a coon-skin cap, with the tail hanging down his back, and the grinning jaws looking out in front over the forehead. Encircling this singular and unique cap, was a narrow belt of scarlet cloth, from which they derived the name of Red Caps. Most of them were young men of athletic proportions, who had been reared in the wilderness, far beyond the boundaries of civilized society, had experienced all the hardships of border life, and were inured to all the perils of border warfare. As soon as the customary salutations were exchanged, they struck the trail of the savages, and followed on with light and buoyant spirits, each vowing summary vengeance against Harbison and his bloodthirsty coadjutors.



## CHAPTER VII.

So passed they on o'er Judah's hills. — *Hemana.*

Aimed well, the chieftain's lance has flown,

Struggling in blood the savage lies;

His roar is sunk in hollow groan—

Sound, merry huntsmen! sound the *pryse*!

*Cadyon Castle.*

We have seen that, after Girty and his band had plunged into the forest, Harbison and the remaining savages, with their captives, stepped carefully into Braddock Run. They followed its meanderings for several miles, the hindmost setting his foot with nice precision into the track of his predecessor. After traveling as far as they thought it expedient in the stream, they came to a flat rock, projecting out into the water, upon which each one stepped, then on the bank, thus leaving no trace whatever behind to indicate the course pursued.

Blanche observed this precaution with the keenest apprehension. She now felt convinced that she was doomed to a long and protracted captivity. Her feelings were unenviable. To be compelled to endure the society of her unfeeling persecutor; to be subject, at all times, to the annoyances of his presence, and forced to listen to his disgusting compliments; or, what was worse, perhaps, his heartless upbraidings, and still worse, his curses and brutal treatment, filled her mind with terror. Her friends could not rescue her, unless by a miracle wrought in her favor, because all clue as to the direction taken by her captor, or as to their destination, was effectually obliterated. She felt greatly embarrassed. She knew not how to act, or what course of conduct it would be proper for her to pursue. But her mind rose with the occasion. An



expedient for the emergency was soon devised. Her captor had made a halt on the bank, and she returned to the stream, as if for the purpose of quenching her thirst, and, unobserved by the savages, drew a rude arrow on the rock with a soft stone, its head pointing toward the West, thus furnishing a key to the direction pursued by the savages. Then tearing a shred from her kerchief, and suspending it to a twig, growing out of the bank, she glided back with lighter spirits. Hope, sweet prophetess, held forth promises of a brighter hour. Alas! how often do we poor creatures of this heartless and uncharitable world mourn their utter blight! Our most glorious anticipations are the soonest ground to dust by disappointment, that ponderous machine, that leaves nothing in its desolate wake but the melancholy memorials of what we longed, and strived, and battled for. But, perhaps, it is better that it should be so. If all our day-dreams were realized, and our desires gratified, we would never know when to circumscribe them. One of man's constitutional imbecilities is always to want, and unless these wants after some imaginary good are checked, they will go on increasing *ad infinitum*.

When Blanche approached the savages, Wy-ing-wa-ha, or Hard-Heart, whose dark eyes glistened with undisguised admiration, asked, as he drew forth a piece of jerked venison from his pouch:

"Is the beautiful pale-face maiden hungry? Eat, it is good."

"The pale-face maiden will not receive food from the hand that is red with the blood of her people."

"Ugh!" exclaimed the Chief, replacing the venison in his pouch, evidently offended at her refusal. "The pale-faces were the red man's enemies. They are numerous as the leaves of the forest. They force the red man back toward the regions of the setting sun, far away from the hunting-grounds of his fathers. The clearings of the pale-faces are on the consecrated graves of his people. He beholds this, and a dark cloud comes before his eyes. He cannot behold the face of the Great Spirit, for he is angry



with his red children. To appease his wrath, they dig up the buried tomahawk. Then His face brightens with a pleasant smile, and the Huron braves go on the war-path. They take many scalps. The song of rejoicing is hushed in the lodges of the pale-faces."

Saying this, Hard-Heart shook his bloody trophies before her eyes, whilst his swarthy features glowed with exultation. Blanche shuddered at the sight of the reeking scalps. Amongst them she beheld the venerable locks of her kind-hearted old grandfather, whom she had loved with a deep and abiding affection. In childhood he had dandled her upon his knee, and sung the sweet, soothing lullaby which she had never heard from a mother's lips. Her earliest recollections were associated with his benevolent countenance, and now that he was numbered amongst the silent dead, and his fatherly voice hushed in that solemn quietude that lives about the last sad resting-place of man, her grief grew almost insupportable. And Miles Howard, too, the dear idol of her heart's worship, whom she had loved with the concentrated feelings of a high-souled and noble woman, and around whom clustered all her bright anticipations of happiness upon this earth, he, too, was hurled senseless and bleeding to the floor before her eyes, and, in all human probability, before this his elegant form, charred and blacked by the fire, was smouldering amid the ruins of her house. These thoughts arose with horrible distinctness before her mind, and she bemoaned his fate with feelings akin to madness. But she, poor stricken one, smothered the intensity of her grief from the eyes of her ruthless captors. Like one who places an implicit reliance upon the goodness and mercy of Him who has said that He would be a father to the fatherless, she bore all with noble fortitude. Turning to the chief, she said:

"The pale-faces would be the red man's friends, but he disdains their friendship. He applies the burning torch to their dwellings, and hardens his heart to the prayer for mercy. He is a snake, that coils himself in the



path of the pale-face. But my people shall trample upon the necks of the red men."

The Huron's eyes emitted flashes of savage resentment, and, as he replied, he laid his hand significantly upon the handle of his scalping-knife.

"The pale-face maiden knows how to boast. She is a singing-bird, and speaks with a forked tongue. The war-path of the Huron warriors is strewn with the curses of the pale-faces. They are sparrows, that fear the swoop of the hawk. The Huron braves are mighty on the war-path. The hurricane is not more destructive in its wrath than the arm of the red man. A few more moons, and the long-knives will disappear like the yellow leaves of the forest in autumn. The whites must all die. None will remain amongst them, but friends of the red men."

"That," exclaimed old Ebony, "is not true, red-skin. White folks," said he, with indignation, "am gemmen; you red-skins am hounds, thieves, murderers, villains. I's not white, but I takes dar part, and if you isn't satisfied wid dat, jist come at me single-handed, and I'll gub you de debil in double-quick time, you infernal image of old Belzebub."

Eb. might as well have spoken to the whistling winds. An angry glance, and a motion of the hand, indicating that if he did not preserve silence, his scalp would pay the forfeit, was the only notice his speech provoked. Hard-Heart, after bestowing a glance full of contempt and hatred upon Blanche, showing that her words had made an unfavorable impression upon him, and were now rankling in his savage heart, ready to burst forth at the first auspicious moment, strode away with that supreme grace and dignity so eminently characteristic of the North American Indians.

In a few moments they resumed their journey toward the West. Their march was toilsome in the extreme. Around them was a magnificent forest, clothed with the "sere and yellow leaf" of autumn; here, presenting the richest crimson tints imaginable; there, burnished with yellow and gold; and further on, the blood-red cone of



the sumach lifted itself in pride above the less brilliant dyes of the witch-hazel and sassafras. Before them, as far the eye could reach, a succession of blue hills, whose tall peaks, crowned with decaying verdure, and reaching one above another to an immense altitude, rose upon the vision. At a distance, their aspect was truly grand and imposing. Their bold and jagged crests, here crowned with an immense growth of lightning-scathed and blasted pines, there with a flourishing group of gigantic oaks, whilst far beyond, stupendous columns of gigantic rock, their bald heads bleached by the storms of a thousand years, rearing themselves like huge ramparts high up towards the clouds, are replete with grandeur and sublimity.

These hills compose links in the chain of that lofty series of mountains, stretching diagonally across the United States, known as the Alleghanies. They are the line separating the waters that flow into the Atlantic from those flowing into the Gulf of Mexico.

Toward night they reached the apex of the savage mountain, a wild and desolate region of country, inhabited alone, to this day, by venomous reptiles and ferocious and untamable animals, and, giving way to the feelings of her overcharged heart, Blanche burst into tears. Hitherto, hope had sustained her, but even that now had departed. She looked back over the rugged hills she had ascended, far away toward the east, where her once happy home existed. She thought of the loved and the lost, and a feeling of utter desolation crept over her. She gazed long and wistfully toward her home, and then bade adieu to civilized life, for she was now far beyond its western boundary; and as the golden radiance of the sun descended behind the western hills, she disappeared in the boundless wilderness.

As the shadows of night began to thicken around them, they approached Savage River, a wild mountain stream, rising in a low, wet region of country, called the Cranberry Swamp, which, running directly South, over innumerable rocks and frightful precipices, forms a boiling and bounding torrent, that thunders through the dark chasms



and rents in the mountains, like the roar of a thousand pieces of ordnance. Its course is traced through a magnificent range of woodland, famous for its gigantic growth of white pine and hemlock, whose evergreen foliage, in the winter time, presents a beautiful contrast to the leafless branches of the chestnut, sugar-maple and other forest timber. This stream is also noted for the great number of speckled trout its waters afford to the lovers of the piscatory art, and for the almost impenetrable thickets of rhododendron that grow spontaneously along its precipitous banks.

Here the savages made preparations for passing the night. They selected a spot close under the base of the mountain, where a huge *pinus alba* extended its wide-spreading arms, so as to protect them from the cold dew. They quickly kindled a fire, and, after despatching their meal of jerked meat, and taking a few whiffs of tobacco-smoke, which they first puffed up to the sky, and then to the earth, to propitiate the Good and Evil Spirit, each savage drew his blanket around him, and seated himself upon the ground. They seemed to be in fine spirits, and congratulated each other upon their respective exploits with undisguised manifestations of delight. One of the prominent characteristics of an Indian warrior is, that he never, in the presence of a stranger, exhibits any external signs of the internal workings of the mind. But there are times when the stern expression of the countenance relaxes, a pleasant smile plays about the compressed lip, and each passing emotion of the heart is impressed upon the features. He then becomes a social being, and converses freely with his companions. This is usually the case after the return of a party from a successful foray into the enemy's country. The daring exploits of each are commented upon, and the meed of praise measured out with a liberal share of words.

After the topics of conversation had been exhausted, each one stretched himself full length upon the earth, and in a brief space of time sunk away into a profound slumber. But how soon was that deep repose, "tired Nature's



sweet restorer, balmy sleep," to be exchanged for the noise and tumult of the conflict, and then for that oppressive and heart-sickening stillness that prevails over the last sacred resting-place of the material body of man! Truly, the ways of Providence are inscrutable! To-day, man lives in the pride and strength of consummate manhood; to-morrow the Angel of Death approaches, and, like a withered and blasted oak, he is shorn of his strength, the vital principle departs, all that is material resolves itself into its primitive elements, and the immortal soul, which the Great Sovereign of the universe breathed into his nostrils, like the trembling dove of the patriarch, flies away to that hallowed mansion where He presides as High Priest of the Sanctuary, and consecrates to immortal love the offered vows of his votaries.

The horrors of that day had created too deep an impression on the mind of Blanche Lovel to be forgotten in sleep. She sat with her head leaning against a tree, to which her unfeeling captors had bound her, to prevent her escape; and the wo-begone and troubled appearance of her beautiful countenance indicated nothing but intense bitterness of heart. The sweet dream of her life was forever over, and darkness—the deep, excruciating darkness of despair—had enveloped her in its sable mantle. Earth had lost its brightest charm; the fond anticipations of her young and guileless heart were to meet no triumphant realization; the glorious sunshine, which had hitherto descended in brilliant showers around her pathway through life was displaced by dark and threatening clouds, and she dared not lift the veil of the future and look on the distant shores of time, at the dim, shadowy images of things to be. All there appeared dark, unrelenting and terrible.

Old Ebony was also bound to a tree, close to the side of Blanche, and so tight were the ligatures around his limbs, that he could scarcely move; but his tongue was free, and whilst he could converse with his young mistress, Eb. was satisfied.

“Missa Blanche, see how qerr’lar debils sleeps. Dem



dat know nuffen would tink dey was innocent as babes, and dat de blood ob de children ob my Heabenly Fadder was not on dar hands. But I sees de cloven foot ob Satan in eberyting dey dose."

"Yes, Ebony," said Blanche, "they are cruel men, and God alone can see the result of our captivity. I solemnly invoke His divine interposition in our behalf. He is the foundation of all goodness, as he is the source of all wisdom. If it be His will that his children should suffer, they should submit with becoming resignation."

"Dat is all werry good, Missa, but when de heart am set on de home, among de friends, de Massa Guy and de Massa Miles, and all ob dem, de spirit am an alien, as de preachers say, from de Commonwealt ob Israel, and wants to be dar, too. Dem unmarciful children ob de evil serpent murdered 'um; but ole Eb. wants to be dar, if Missa Blanche could git away from dem Injins and go wid him."

"Alas! Ebony, I have no home, no kindred, no friends! I am, indeed, a wanderer, a homeless wanderer upon the face of the earth! I have not where to lay my aching head! But I humbly confide in Him who has said that He would temper the blast to the shorn lamb."

"Bless de Lord, Missa Blanche, Ebony's your friend. He ain't gwien to leave you, till he dead."

Blanche made no reply, and the head of the good old negro, in a short period, fell upon his breast, and in a brief space of time he was fast asleep. Happy he that can repose calmly and sweetly when surrounded with a multitude of dangers and difficulties. Blanche meditated long, and prayed solemnly for strength to triumph over her sorrows. She cast her tearless eyes up toward the deep blue sky, where a thousand glittering diadems sparkled on the dark brow of Night, and as she gazed upon their calm radiance, she grew more resigned to her fate. Their serene effulgence seemed to infuse a new ray of hope into her desponding heart. She had long indulged in this meditative mood, when a drowsiness began to creep over her faculties. The roaring water, plunging madly over preci-



pices, and rushing, like a perturbed spirit, among the rocks, produced a tranquilizing effect upon her nerves. The trees danced away before her eyes, grew indistinct, and then faded in the distance. Then the sweet chirp of a cricket, and the hum of innumerable insects, blending harmoniously together, acted like a soothing melody, and she sunk away into a troubled sleep.

Then Wy-ing-wa-ha, or Hard-Heart, rose noiselessly as a panther from his recumbent position, gazed cautiously around him, and clutching his scalping-knife convulsively in his right hand, he advanced toward her. His brawny chest heaved with contending emotions; his dark eyes emitted sparks of consummate hatred, and his dusky brow gathered into an ominous frown. The incautious words that fell from her lips in the morning had stung him to the soul, and were now rankling deep in his savage breast. From the moment he had laid his hand so significantly upon his knife, the fell design of taking her life had entered his heart. Nothing but her blood could soothe his resentment. The moment was propitious for the accomplishment of his hellish designs. The whole band were locked in slumber; none were there to oppose or frustrate his object. He could commit the bloody deed, glide back to his position amongst the incarnate fiends around him, and thus avert suspicion from himself. But an eye was upon him—a small, sparkling black eye, that never for a moment ceased to observe his slightest movement. It peered out from a cluster of bushes, where its owner lay concealed, quiet as the silver rays of the moon on the tops of the trees above his head.

Hard-Heart gazed a moment upon his innocent and unconscious victim, and a gleam of malicious triumph passed over his uncouth features. Then he raised the glittering steel above his head, and one long, bony hand, still crimsoned with human blood, was extended toward the unfortunate girl. But at that moment she moved, her lips parted, and she breathed in tenderest accents the name of Miles. “Miles, dear Miles,” she murmured, “save me, oh! save me from this cruel destiny.” And then her arms



were extended, as if in supplication; and then, as if a new light had burst upon her, she exclaimed, in a voice of the deepest agony, "Alas, alas! he is no more!" The savage looked a moment into her sweet, innocent face, and again a gleam of ferocity lit up every lineament of his swarthy and begrimmed features.

"The pale-face maiden," he mused, "is as beautiful as the stars of the night. Her countenance is as lovely as the smile of the morning, when the dew-drop gems the flower. Her voice is melodious as the music of the silver wave. Her motions are graceful as the swaying reeds. Her step is as elastic as that of the wild fawn of the mountain. But the pale-face maiden must die. My white brother must hunt another squaw. Her words are full of melody, but the sting of the wasp is concealed beneath. The pale-face maiden has darted its poison into the red man's heart. It burns like a living coal of fire. Wy-ing-wa-ha thirsts for her blood, to wash the indignity from his soul. She must die."

Then again the murderous weapon was raised aloft, and again the hand, red with human gore, was stretched forth to clutch the victim in its relentless grasp, when the report of a rifle rang out in startling distinctness upon the still air, and Wy-ing-wa-ha, hurling his knife full at the breast of Blanche Lovel, and bounding up several feet from the earth, fell back by her side, uttering with his last breath the terrific war-whoop of the Hurons. A moment more, and the surrounding darkness was lit up with the continuous flash of fire-arms, whilst the wild yell of contending foes, fiercely struggling for the supremacy, reverberated along the clefts and hollows in the mountains, like the voices of a thousand exulting demons.

Ebony's brain, for a moment, was a chaos of confusion; but, quickly collecting his scattered senses, he comprehended in an instant what was transpiring around him, and shouted at the top of his voice:

"Gum dem imps ob de region ob perdition, who waits on de Draggun wid his hundred tales, gum 'um de debil. Hab no marcy on 'um. Dey's black-hearted rascals, dey



is, and hab dealins wid the ebil sarpent. Dey tied dis ole nigger to de tree, 'case dey 'fraid he gwien to 'scape. Dat's right, gum it to 'um. Yah, yah, yah! Wake snakes! Yah, yah, yah!

“Great gñosts and hobgoblins  
Hab come down from de skies,  
To frighten de wicked,  
And to scratch out dar eyes.

“Gorramighty! how it pleases dis ole sinner to see 'um run and howl! 'Fore de Lord, I b'leeve dey tink de ghosts and hobgoblins am 'bout, sure enough. Wake, snakes! de world's a floatin'. Yah, yah, yah!”

Leaving old Eb. to indulge in his irresistible flow of spirits, we will turn to another scene.

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## CHAPTER VIII.

As Chief who hears his warder call,  
“To arms! the foeman storms the wall!”  
The antlered monarch of the waste  
Sprang from heathery couch in haste.—*Scott.*

Without a moment's hesitation, the pursuing party plunged into the pathless woods. A desire to recover Blanche Lovel, and inflict a punishment on her captors, commensurate with the heinousness of their offence, stimulated them to extraordinary exertions. The difficulties of Wills Mountain were soon surmounted, and as the autumn sun reached its meridian height they stood upon its towering eminence, gazing towards the West, where the outlines of the distant mountains, rearing their lofty heads majestically one above another in regular gradation, and clothed in purple and gold livery, were distinctly traced against the deep-blue sky. They stood for several moments, contemplating the beauty and magnificence of the



scene before them, when they were roused by the fierce and threatening howl of a pack of wolves in pursuit of their prey. They could distinctly hear the brush crack, as though some animal was madly rushing through them, and as the chase approached, the feet of the flying beast were heard beating the earth with great rapidity. Directly a noble buck, with antlers lying back, sides saturated with flakes of foam, tongue lolling out, and big tear-drops of agony streaming from his distended and blood-shot eyes, burst at a single bound into view. The next moment, with the velocity of the wind, the gallant "monarch of the waste," had cleared the intervening space where they stood, and disappeared in the neighboring thicket. On came his relentless pursuers :

"Cruel as death, and hungry as the grave,  
Burning for blood, bony, gaunt and grim,"

dashing through the forest like a pack of fiends, at each bound uttering a ferocious howl, and fairly ripping up the earth with their impetuous and headlong speed. The adjacent mountains caught up the angry yelps, and it seemed as though a thousand infuriated demons were calling to each other from their cloud-cleaving summits. The young hunters, commiserating the fate of the noble animal, and wishing to rescue him from his sad destiny, whilst they, at the same time, gratified a secret desire to exhibit their consummate skill with the rifle, took their stand immediately in his wake. On came the yelping crew with the speed of the whirlwind. Closer and closer they approach :

"With their long gallop, which can tire  
The deer-hound's hate, and the hunter's fire,"

until the foremost of the pack, a tremendous grey wolf, sprang with the velocity of an arrow into the open space. Instantly the clicking of a dozen rifles was heard, but at that moment the voice of Logan arrested their purpose.



"Do not my white brothers know that the report of a rifle is heard for many miles! The ears of the Huron are open. They will fly like the deer when he hears the twang of the bow-string. Let my white brothers take down their rifles, or the report will make the Huron run with the speed of the antelope."

"Logan is right," interposed Colonel Cresap. "The report of a gun in the wilderness, at this time, might make a long war-path for us."

"Yes," added Daniel Browning, "you're right there, Colonel; and if the skulkin' reptiles diskiver we are on their trail, and that thar's no chance to git away with the gal, they'll be mighty apt to tomahawk her for her scalp, they will. Experience, in my skirmishes with the artful serpents, has learned me that much, it has, or the sun doesn't set over yonder mountain."

This conversation continued but a moment, and before the entire pack had penetrated the open space referred to, Logan had drawn his good locust bow from his back, an arrow from the quiver, and directly the sharp twang of the string was heard, and the fatal arrow dispatched on its mission of death. It struck the foremost beast in the rear of the shoulder, and, penetrating to the heart, fastened its cruel barb into its vitals. He gave a few headlong bounds, snapping the while with great ferocity at the arrow still buried in his side, and then tumbled over, and after a few convulsions—the last efforts of expiring nature to preserve her vital functions—gave up the ghost. An ominous howl succeeded, and the whole pack, numbering some twenty, scampered off as fast as their baffled rage would permit them in a contrary direction.

When they resumed their march, Colonel Cresap requested David Thompson and Daniel Browning to keep a little in advance of them, on the trail, as they were accustomed to the trackless wilderness, and understood the nature of the expedients, and could easily unravel the stratagems which an experienced Indian warrior would devise to mislead pursuit.

"If so be," replied David, "you're all willin' we'll



try what virtue thar ar' in our old peepers on an Indian trail. We've follered many a greasy Huron, the cusses, and if we haven't larned how to sarcumwent the cunnin' warmints in their deviltry"—

"Why, then," chimed in Daniel Browning, "we ar' niggers, and don't know nothin' about the natur' o' a red-skin, that's all! But here's Braddock's Run, and I kinder presume the thievin' imps hev tried all their cunnin' contraptions to throw us on the wrong scent. Now, I wish I may be doubled up and squeezed to death in the hug o' a three year old b'ar, if they hev'n't left a trail behind 'em a city gent mout foller."

"Not so fast, friend Daniel," David replied; "perhaps the eternal rogues hev been cuttin' up some o' thar good-for-nothin' tricks hereabouts. That trail isn't nat'ral to the eye. It's too broad by a mighty sight. Injun cunnin' can't deceive the larnin' o' a white gentleman that's been brought up to thar artful ways, in that kind o' style. I'll try the creek; for I'm mightily mistaken in my idee o' the matter, if they hev'n't taken water. Leastwise I'll see."

"Perhaps the imps hev," replied Daniel, not a little nettled that his sagacity in such matters should be questioned; "perhaps they hev, for the ugly creatures ar' nat'rally amphibious."

David Thompson hastened to the banks of the stream, and in a moment shouted back to his companions:

"The warmints couldn't fool an old hunter; he seen the snows o' too many winters, and sarcumwented thar deviltry in too many skrimmages for that. See thar, Colonel," he continued, pointing to the margin of the stream, "see thar, whar one o' the sneakin' warlets slipped off this rock in the mud. Thar's the full print o' his moccasin. Ah! I see, the Mingo don't think much of his skill in hidin' a trail."

"The Huron is a dog," was the sententious reply of Logan, and the party hastened forward on the trail with rapid strides. An hour's walk brought them to the spot where the savages had abandoned the stream, and the



eagle-eyes of the Mingo Chief immediately detected the arrow drawn upon the rock, and David, stepping forward, exhibited, with a smile of exultation, the shred of the kerchief which Blanche had suspended from the twig and handed it to Miles. He pressed his lips upon it over and over again, and, uttering a silent prayer for her safety, he secreted it in his bosom.

They struck the trail immediately, which, feeling perfectly secure from pursuit, the savages took no pains to conceal. They bounded forward with renewed energy, and in a few hours had scaled the natural ramparts of the Savage Mountain, a huge mass of earth and rock, towering up in the wilderness, like some colossal giant in olden time amid his less majestic and imposing associates. The shades of night began to gather around them, and it required a great deal of patient perseverance to follow the trail; but the tact of the old foresters, aided by the experience of Logan, surmounted all difficulties.

Forming in single file, they cautiously descended the rugged face of the mountain, parting the thick underbrush with their hands, and easing them back to their natural positions, so as to create as little noise as possible. They were convinced that the savages had encamped at the base of the mountain, and their progress was extremely slow and wary. Great circumspection was necessary, for the least noise, the springing back of a bush, or the snapping of a twig, might have proved disastrous to the object of their mission. After progressing in this manner for some time, the Mingo Chief, who was a little in advance of the rest, stooping down, and peering through the thick undergrowth for a moment, uttered a scarcely audible "Hist!"

They gathered silently around him, each one clutching his deadly rifle with nervous impatience. They felt that the contest—a contest that, in all human probability, might prove fatal to some of them—was close at hand, and, like high-mettled steeds, checked by the vigorous arms of their riders, they fairly chafed and foamed to essay their powers. A glance in the direction indicated by



the extended hand of the Mingo, revealed the objects of their pursuit, grouped around a huge fire, their savage visages gleaming in the broad glare with an expression of most profound complacency.

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## CHAPTER XI.

Be patient till midnight. Get your musters,  
And bid our friends prepare their companions;  
Set all in readiness to strike the blow.—*Byron.*

They fought, like brave men, long and well,  
They piled the ground with Moslem slain;  
They conquered—but Bozzaris fell,  
Bleeding at every vein.—*Halleck.*

They stood for several moments silently gazing upon the unsuspecting savages, but not a word fell from their compressed lips—not a limb moved, so intense was their look. Nothing was heard for some time but their suppressed breathing; nothing indicated life about them, but their erect position, the occasional twitching of the muscles about the mouth, and the flashing and tremulous motion of the eye. It was the profound calm that always precedes the bursting of the storm—the smothered spark that engenders the crashing and roaring of the conflagration.

Blanche was sitting a little apart from her captors, with her head leaning against a tree, and the sorrowful and wretched appearance of her countenance struck a sympathetic chord in every heart. The backwoodsmen, those men of stern visage, could with difficulty suppress their emotion, as they gazed upon her. Their stern natures were softened and subdued, and every now and then a tear stole down their sunburnt cheeks. Miles was greatly agitated. All the fervent sympathies of his heart were called forth, and all the deep, unfathomable love which



had grown with his growth, and strengthened with his strength, that he cherished for his dear, idolized Blanche, seemed to increase an hundred fold in intensity, as he contemplated the difficulties and dangers that surrounded her, which, at the very moment of her deliverance, might bring destruction upon her devoted head. He became impatient, but, being discreet, was willing to await the action of his friends.

"The Huron," whispered Logan, at length, "is a squaw. He is a snail, that creeps on the home path. A Mingo warrior would have traveled with the feet of the elk. His trail would have been as viewless as the course of the sun through the heavens. The Huron leaves a track behind, so plain that a Mingo boy could follow it. He is a cowardly dog, that stops to gnaw the bone by the way-side. His ears are shut, to exclude the sound of danger. His eyes are closed in darkness, for fear that he will see the face of Mingo."

"Judgmatically spoken," responded David, in a low tone. "The Hurons ar' eternal willians; leastwise my larnin', and it arn't none o' your book-larnin' either, teaches me so. The carcusses o' the rascallions isn't fit for wolf-bait. They'd starve to death on such p'ison. See how innocent the bloodhounds look. They wouldn't hurt a babe, not they. But afore another sun we'll hear their savage war-whoop among these hills, and, unless my idee o' the matter is wrong, it'll be the death-whoop o' some o' them. Although the time hain't come, yet I feel like pitchin' right into 'em, the hateful reptyles."

"Yes," exclaimed the more eager of the party, "let us on them like the swoop of the hawk. We owe them a debt, and desire to liquidate it to the uttermost farthing."

"By the life o' me, friends," exclaimed Daniel, in a vehement, but subdued tone, "didn't you hear me say that the proper time hadn't come? Or ar' ye possessed o' the Evil One, that ye want to rush on the warmints without considering the danger? That would be sartin death to some of ye youngsters. Now, I'm not con-



sant with your idees o' the like, but I take it, human life arn't a thing to be thrown away, when thar's no necessity for it. My old life arn't worth much, I'll allow, but I'm in no humor, jist now, to be knocked in the head, and have my top-knot taken and smoked in the wigwam o' some o' them greasy-faced Hurons. Wait till the imps get asleep, and then we'll walk into 'em most beautiful, and not a ha'r o' your heads shall be touched."

"Them's my sentiments to a fraction," replied Daniel Browning, "and I say further, if we undertake the work afore us now, we'll rue it, 'case them bloodthirsty cusses would just as lieve tomahawk the gal, as not, when they diskiver that we've disconsarted thar Injin' cunnin'. And that ornery beast, Harbison, is no better nor them oudacious red-skins he mixes in with, he isn't."

"You're right thar, Daniel."

"Right! to be sure I am, or I'm a nigger, that's sartin. Why, it's jist the nature o' a Huron to do sich like. They can't help it—it's ground into 'em. I've seen it did several times, afore now. Didn't the Crouchin' Eagle try that caper with Miss Alice Morley, that was?—and didn't me and David thar circumwent the unsarcumcised imp o' the 'arth?"

"That's true, Daniel."

"You are all perfectly right, my good friends," said Colonel Cresap; "and I see no legitimate reason why we should bring matters so speedily to a crisis, that may result in loss of life. Prudence is the better part of valor, and I think it would be prudent to remain in our present position until the proper time arrives, and then we'll endeavor to surprise them. That will materially enhance the probabilities of success."

Old David muttered something about them "'tarnal book-words, as nobody could understand," before he deigned a reply. He then said:

"All wery good, Colonel; but, howsomever, as I'm better conwarsant with these here woods than you, I will jist say, the warmints may prove mighty troublesome if they should git into laurel along the banks of the river yander;



and to hinder that matter, I'm for dividin' the men, and sendin' part to take a sarnuit, with Dan'el and Mingo, around the p'int o' the hills, and git into cover on that side. Then, when the right time comes, we'll give it to 'em fore and aft."

This suggestion being approved of, the Red Caps were detailed for the purpose. The object was soon accomplished, without disturbing the savages, and each party then awaited the preconcerted signal with nervous impatience.

The savages, after they had finished their meal, passed the pipe from mouth to mouth, each sending a volume of tobacco smoke into the air, twisting and curling about their heads like a thing instinct with life and volition. When they had ceased to regale themselves with the fumes of the fragrant weed, they drew their blankets around them, and lay down to enjoy pleasant dreams, as they supposed. But, before the dawning of another sun, a mighty change was to be effected; the wild yells of relentless foes, burning with resentment for the wrongs inflicted upon the settlement, was to break in upon their slumbers, and their immortal souls, in all human probability, would be severed from the material body, and be transported to the happy hunting grounds of their fathers, to guide their birchen canoe over its smooth lakes, to revel amid its Elysian fields, and drink in its glorious beams of brighter and more effulgent sun.

The whites observed their movements with a lively interest. Each one felt that a crisis was approaching, and nerved himself to meet it like a man. The probabilities of success were against them, they knew, but there was no flinching; no inordinate longing to be beyond the reach of danger; no desire to escape the responsibilities of the position they had assumed. They possessed too much stern and unyielding firmness of character to shrink back affrighted. All stood firm and immutable as a rock of adamant. They had sworn to avenge the wrongs of the injured, and they were there prepared to accomplish the object, or, like heroes, nobly fall in the effort, and thus



carve out for themselves a name that would beam forth brightly in time to come.

If any experienced anything that could be assimilated to, or constructed into apprehension, it was Miles Howard; but that apprehension had no reference to his own personal safety. It had, in his estimation, a nobler, tenderer object. There was no knowing the extent to which Harbison's evil passions might transport him. And then, too, in the hour of conflict, when the fierce nature of the Indian should be lashed into fury, Blanche might not escape their indiscriminate hatred with impunity. He was fully aware that their savage spirit exulted with fiendish joy in the perpetration of sanguinary deeds, and to gratify this propensity to some extent, Blanche, the beloved idol of his soul, might be the first victim. He shuddered at the contemplation. The bare possibility of such an outrage produced in his breast the deepest anxiety; the execution of it, he felt, would be worse a thousand fold than death. As he pondered this matter over in his mind, the pulsations of his heart grew more violent, and his deep breathing manifested the intense solicitude he experienced.

Her situation was certainly one of extreme peril, and nothing short of judicious manœuvring could save her from the murderous tomahawk of the savage. The least false or inconsiderate step, or the slightest mishap of any kind, might cause her sacrifice at the shrine of their ungovernable rage. The savages outnumbered the whites, and complete and perfect surprise, therefore, could alone secure her safety. All felt this to be true, and the plans were devised with an eye single to the successful accomplishment of that object. It must not be supposed that, in their anxiety for Blanche, old Eb., the really kind-hearted old negro, was forgotten. They were all equally old Eb.'s champions. They cherished a kindly feeling for the old fellow, and, whilst they struck a blow for her, they struck a blow for him also. The recapture of one, was the recapture of both.

After an uninterrupted silence of several hours, which



seemed an age to the excited watchers, the proper time approached for the beginning of the conflict. The moon shone forth in all her silver radiance upon the scene, and innumerable stars gemmed the heavens with their twinkling light. All was calm around as the silence of the grave. David Thompson, who was to give the signal, then stole along through the thick underbrush with a cautious and stealthy step toward the Hurons. He approached within thirty yards of the savages, and stood contemplating their uncouth appearance. Whilst his scrutinizing glance still rested upon them, and his long rifle was silently being elevated to his face, Wy-ing-wa-ha, or Hard Heart, rose from his recumbent position. The old forester sank back into a clump of bushes immediately in his rear, like a shadow. He noiselessly watched his movements, and thrice did the never-failing rifle bear upon his begrimmed and blackened features, and as often was it lowered to the ground. At a glance, his practiced eye comprehended his wicked design, and only awaited the eve of its fulfilment, as if to study the workings of the horrid physiognomy of the savage, which is generally so stolid and incomprehensible, to hurl the contents of his rifle into his brain. When the glittering steel rose above the head of Hard-Heart the second time, ready to be plunged into the breast of Blanche, and his long, bony hand, still reeking with human gore, was about to grasp her raven tresses, the old forester became fearfully excited, and with a quick movement, the rifle was brought to his shoulder; for a moment he stood there, in the bright moonlight, like a bronze statue, his iron nerves stretched to their utmost tension, the left foot a little in advance of the other, the weight of the body concentrated upon his right; his ample chest thrown back, the head leaning forward with a gentle inclination, the one eye sparkling with an intense and almost painful fixedness along the polished tube, and then a loud and startling report rung out amid the sublime stillness of the night, and awakened a thousand viewless echoes along the caverns and the gorges of the surrounding mountains. The hidden messenger was



hurled forth with fatal precision, and Hard-Heart, shouting his terrific war-cry, and hurling his glittering knife at the breast of Blanche Lovel, with tremendous force, pitched forward and expired. The knife, fortunately, missed her, and, burying itself in a tree above her head, snapped in two with the violence with which it was impelled.

The echoes had scarcely died away before the murderous contents of a dozen rifles were belched forth upon the Hurons, accompanied by the battle-cry of the Red Caps, and the terrific war-whoop of the Mingo.

If a thunderbolt had burst in all its wrath over their heads, or if one of the adjacent mountains had been suddenly rent asunder with a violent volcanic convulsion, and its burning and hissing lava poured down upon them with the concentrated fury of an avalanche, they could not have been more startled and bewildered. For a moment they stood motionless, seemingly transformed to stone, and then shouting their ferocious war-cry in tones so wild and terrific as almost to freeze the soul with horror, they caught up their fire-arms, and rushed headlong toward the laurel thicket, for the purpose of concealing themselves. But Daniel Browning, with his Red Caps, eager for the bloody strife, was prepared for their reception; and when they came within range, poured into them a destructive volley, which, for an instant, arrested their steps, but it was but for an instant. His discharge was answered by a yell of defiance. Discharging their carbines, and clutching their tomahawks, which they waved in glittering circles above their heads, the Hurons rushed with redoubled speed upon the old backwoodsman and his little band, at each bound uttering a prolonged and threatening war-whoop. But the old man's blood was now heated, and, calling his young friends around him, he thus addressed them:

"Now, friends," he exclaimed, with terrible emphasis, whilst his weather-beaten countenance glowed with that indescribable expression of hatred which always settles upon the features in the hour of battle. "Now, friends, gin the rapsallions the devil. Have no marcy on the blood-thirsty hounds, 'case why, you see they've no good



feelin' for real ginnuine white folks like ourselves, they haven't. They'd as lieve raise your scalp-locks as eat when they're hungry, and a tarnation sight sooner. Here they come, and our cry is blood for blood. Now into 'em, the thievin' wolves. Plug it right into them. Hurra! friends! no falterin', but walk right into the artful varmints. Thar goes the Mingo's gun—and listen, thar's his well-known war-cry; and thar agin spoke the rifle of David Thompson. Two more red-skins have ended thar last war-path. Now don't be outdone, friends, but gin it to him once more. Kill the wolves, now, and take their scalps arterwards."

The onset of Daniel was so impetuous, that the savages, after a few ineffectual attempts to gain the cover of the laurel, retreated with precipitation.

But old David and the Mingo got together in their rear, fired into their bleeding ranks, and two more savages fell. Growing desperate under their repeated discomfitures, they again wheeled and dashed impetuously at the thicket in which Daniel was stationed. He beheld them approaching, and shouted to his companions, in a voice of thunder:

"Git ready, for the imps o' the evil serpent ar' comin' on us agin. Now, boys, now's your time to strike a blow that'll tell. All together, and show the cussed greasy-faced reptyles o' the 'arth the wisages o' men. Take that," cried he, striking a herculean savage over the head with his tomahawk, and cleaving him to the shoulders. "That's what I call doin' the thing genteel. He'll not trouble peaceable white folks again, I sorter reckon. If he does I'm a nigger, that's sartain. Look out thar, Thomas Cresap! Don't you see that white-livered hound o' a red-skin sneakin' up behind ye? That's right, gin it to the dirty thing. By hokey! he's done for in this world, for sartain!"

Thus he continued for several moments, and in the meantime laying about him with tremendous blows. At one instant, he would plunge his long scalping-knife into the breast of one savage, and the next, hurl his tomahawk,



already crimsoned with blood, with equal dexterity, into the brains of another, uttering, at the execution of each feat, a subdued guttural laugh, peculiar to backwoodsmen, when anything occurs to excite the risible faculties. They are an eccentric race of beings, totally dissimilar, probably owing to their peculiar mode of life, to any other portion of the great human family. Their days are spent in the deep solitude of the wilderness, amid its storms, its torrents, and its glorious sunshine, either in trapping the beaver, hunting the deer and elk, or exploring regions hitherto unknown to civilized man. Of the great human herd, and the passions and prejudices by which they are swayed to and fro, like a reed in the blast, they are comparatively ignorant. Shut up in the limitless depths of the forest, they hear but little of the rise and fall of nations; and never dream of their advance to power and knowledge, their jealousies, their fierce hate, and their sanguinary wars. They take no pride in anything but proficiency in their peculiar vocation. Remorseless savages, and ferocious beasts of prey are their sole companions by day and night. They glory in the wild excitement their frequent encounters with them affords. It robs existence of its wearisome monotony, and imparts a fascination to their mode of life, altogether irresistible. Daniel Browning had been reared in the backwoods, far removed from the boundaries of civilized society; he had encountered a thousand imminent perils in battle with the savages, where defeat was certain death; he had braved all manner of danger, under all manner of circumstances, in sunshine and in storm, amid the wild wrath of the tempest, and in the rushing and leaping hurricane of fire that sometimes sweeps over our magnificent forests, killing and blasting the timber, and leaving in its wake a mournful scene of desolation and decay, but, like the holy youth spoken of in Scripture, he had triumphed over them all.

Colonel Cresap, and his portion of the Red Caps, now having taken a circuit through the intervening undergrowth of the forest, came upon the flank of the Hurons unexpectedly, effectually hemming them in, and cutting off



all possibility of escape. He poured into them a deadly discharge, and then the scene became truly terrific. The fierce war-whoop of the savages, and the ominous yell of the whites, mingled with the incessant roar of the rifles, and the loud twang of the bow-string, accompanied by the groans of the wounded and dying, were most appalling. The savages attempted to escape, but they were met on all sides by the flash of rifles and the glittering tomahawk and scalping-knife, and terror, rage and despair became alternately riveted upon their painted faces. They fought with the wildest desperation. The escutcheon of their tribe was not tarnished by a single act of cowardice. They would not deign to ask for quarter. They would rather have impaled themselves upon their own scalping-knives. But their courage was unavailing. Nothing could withstand the indomitable resolution and the unconquerable spirit of the whites. Revenge was their battle-cry, and, ever and anon, as the noise and tumult of the conflict subsided, that ominous word could be heard reverberating along the neighboring mountains, and the work of death would again commence with redoubled violence.

The knife and the tomahawk did the work with dreadful violence. The backwoodsmen of those days understood their use from experience, and in the hour of battle wielded them with an effect but little less murderous than that of the fatal rifle. At each successive blow an Indian brave was sent on his long war-path, without even an opportunity to sing his death-song, preparatory to his gliding over the smooth lakes and happy hunting grounds of his fathers.

At length a single warrior remained alive amid the dreadful carnage, the last desponding remnant of his band—unsubdued and ready to meet his fate with that total abandonment of self, and indifference to death, so characteristic of his race. In a voice low and sweet as the sighing of the evening breeze, he commenced his death-song:

“Ki-tah-ha is brave. He can look death in the face with an unflinching eye. Let the Long-Knives strike!



Ki-tah-ha is prepared to go. His red brothers are on the trail that leads to the presence of the Great Spirit. He is ready to follow them. His heart is bared to the knife. Why do not the Long-Knives strike? The scalp of Ki-tah-ha is easy taken. His trail is smooth. The pale-faces he has scalped have removed the brambles from his path. Strike! Ki-tah-ha is the last of his band. He is a blasted oak in the clearing of the pale-faces. The beams of the morning sun will never more be shed on his head. The morning light will behold him far on his way to the happy hunting grounds of his fathers. The Long-Knives have desecrated the red man's forest, and killed the game placed here for his subsistence. The accursed plough has ripped up the sacred graves of his fathers. Where their bones sleep, there are the wigwams of the pale-faces. Strike! Ki-tah-ha desires to go!"

This speech was delivered in a monotonous tone, between singing and speaking, and when the last words fell from his lips, his countenance assumed an expression of the most savage ferocity, and his eyes glittered with the fury of an incarnate fiend. He stood for a moment as if a new thought had penetrated his mind. His countenance had in a moment changed from an expression of disappointment and despair to one of ungovernable rage; and then again the most stolid indifference to his fate. He stood calm and collected, like a stag at bay, regarding the dangers that encompassed him with a bold and fearless aspect. Then, concentrating all his gigantic muscular powers for a final effort, before any one could comprehend his purpose, he hurled his tomahawk with the rapidity of lightning full at the breast of young Cresap, the son of the Colonel, and with a yell, long, loud and ferocious, he bounded over the heads of his relentless foes and disappeared in the deep darkness of the wilderness.

So unexpected was the daring act to young Cresap, that he scarcely had time to utter an exclamation of horror, before the fatal instrument was buried to the very eye in his chest. As he fell back into the arms of Daniel Browning, with his remaining strength, he tore the weapon from



his breast, and in a moment expired, without uttering a syllable. The grief of his father can be imagined, but the pen is inadequate to describe it. He folded the inanimate form to his heart, and an expression of poignant agony gradually spread over his features. But we will not intrude upon the sacredness of a parent's grief.

After the conflict was over, Miles Howard, lost to all the fierce excitement that had so lately raged around him, stood clasping the beautiful form of Blanche Lovel to his heart. What a world of happiness was in that silent embrace! She whom he had considered lost forevermore, was, in God's providence, restored to him; and whilst he stood there, enveloped in the silvery radiance of the moon, with the quiet stars, beautifully bright, twinkling in the resplendant sky above him, he breathed a grateful prayer to God for this mark of His divine pleasure. Nor were Blanche's lips silent. Her invocation to the Father of the fatherless had been heard and answered, and, whilst tears of heartfelt joy bedewed her cheek, she knelt down upon the lowly turf, and in words replete with natural eloquence, poured forth the gratitude of her heart.

David Thompson and Daniel Browning silently gazed upon the devoted pair, and the old men's hearts became too full for utterance. They grasped Miles Howard by the hand, and gave it a pressure that expressed more eloquently than all the set phrases that ever gleamed from a vocabulary, the intense and happy emotions of their souls. They were old, and perhaps rude in exterior, but noble hearts beat beneath their rough vestments. They knew how to appreciate the warm and generous impulses of youthful love, the garland-spring of life, the dream of the heart, and the impassioned poetry of nature.

At this moment John Harbison bounded forward from a thicket of brush, behind which he had concealed himself in the beginning of the combat. In the brief space of time he had remained there, he seemed to have suffered a thousand deaths. His countenance was as pale as death, and haggard, and he tottered as if the weight of three-score years and ten was upon his shoulders. He timidly



raised his eyes to those about him, but meeting no sympathy in their stern looks, all his evil passions were again kindled into a flame, and, with the diabolical malignity of an assassin, he endeavored to terminate his bloody work by plunging his knife into the bosom of Miles Howard. But, fortunately, the Mingo Chief, comprehending the purport of the movement, with a hand that never grew unsteady in an emergency, dealt the degraded wretch a blow with his tomahawk that would have felled an ox, and, before any one could intercept him, tore the reeking scalp from his head, and suspended it at his girdle. He died as he had lived, the victim of his evil passions.

Old Ebony continued to pour forth a torrent of words upon the frightened savages, mingled every now and then with snatches of rude songs, such as we have quoted, until the ligatures binding his limbs were severed. After expressing his gratitude, his exuberant spirit expended itself in another song, not less noted for the absence of all harmony than for the want of all poetic sentiment:

“Wake snakes! de world am floatin,’  
Trees am dancin’ in delight;  
And the Injins, they hab run  
Through the bushes out ob sight.

“Some been kill, and some run off,  
Some lose scalp-locks in de fight;  
But we’s got free, dat’s enough,  
And go home wid all our might.”

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## CHAPTER X.

Scarce could they hear or see their foes,  
Until at weapon-point they close.  
They close in clouds of smoke and dust,  
With sword-sway, and with lances' thrust;  
And such a yell was there  
Of sudden and portentous birth,  
As if men fought upon the earth,  
And fiends in upper air.—*Marmion*.

When the combat had ceased, and the yells of contending foes had been displaced by the solemn quietude of the forest, they turned their attention toward interring the dead body of their companion. The sad ceremonial was soon performed, and the inanimate remains was lowered amid profound silence to their last resting-place upon earth. A rude pile of stones still marks the spot where his bones repose.

Daylight soon dawned upon the world. The sun rose up in unclouded magnificence over the hills, and bathed the forest in a flood of golden radiance. The jay and the merry red-breast, still lingering in their summer home, trilled their happy songs; and the squirrel, jumping nimbly from tree to tree, sent abroad his chattering noise, as if in defiance of man's power to injure. All within the depths of the forest was life and animation. Weary and worn with travel and watching, the little party made but slow progress on their homeward path. They were compelled to pick their way through the briars and thick undergrowth, up steep ascents, and over rugged mountains, whose precipitate sides, covered with rocks and brambles, almost defied their strength to ascend them. They were forced to proceed with the utmost caution. At every step



almost, they encountered Indian signs which admonished them of the necessity of keeping their force united. They might be attacked at any moment; for as the Mingo informed them, numerous bands of Hurons were scouring the forest, ready at any moment to wreak their vengeance upon the unprotected, and the many trails which intersected each other at intervals, furnished irrefragible evidence of the correctness of the information.

To guard against an ambuscade, which their subtle foes might prepare for them, David Thompson and Logan acted as scouts, always keeping in advance. They had not proceeded more than five or six miles, when the Mingo suddenly halted, and, laying one finger significantly upon his lips, pointed, without uttering a syllable, to an object about a hundred yards in advance of them. The keen sight of the old forester immediately detected the object; but whether man or beast, he could not determine—but of one thing he was fully satisfied, it was dead. Several large buzzards were wheeling in broad circles above the tree-tops, uttering their ominous shrieks, whilst a large catamount was standing over the prostrate carcass, regaling himself upon the putrid flesh. The rifle of David was brought to his shoulder in an instant, but recovering his momentary forgetfulness, he as quickly dropped it to the ground.

“I’ll not do it,” he exclaimed, “it’ll not do. *Injins* have ears like rabbits, and the report may bring the whole *yelpin’* crew down on us. But what says Logan? Can’t he surmount the beast?”

The chief made no reply, but deliberately stepping in front of the old forester, he drew an arrow from the quiver at his back, placed it in the bow, and sent it whizzing through the air. The ferocious animal bounded up several feet, fell backwards down the hill, dead.

They approached, and, to their astonishment, beheld the mutilated remains of a savage, with a frightful gash in his face, and the scalp-lock torn from his head. The body was torn a good deal by the catamount. The Mingo bent over the corpse, and examined it very closely for a few



moments, and then administered to the inanimate body a contemptuous kick, and hissed between his teeth.

"The Huron is a dog. He goes on the war-path like a whining cur, that the Mingo warrior may take his scalp. The blood of an Indian brave does not run in his veins. They are squaws."

"Thar's truth in that, Mingo," the old scout replied; "thar's truth in that. No one can gainsay it that knows the nature o' the Huron; and, though no man ought to boast o' his gifts, yet I lay I could take the top-knot o' half a dozen o' the warmints. In a scrimmage or out'n a scrimmage, it's all the same. They are not the real, genuine grit. Gin 'em an ambushment to begin with, and twenty agin one, and perhaps they'll sarcumvent him; but not otherwise, if he understands the nat'ral doin's o' the artful wolves."

By this time the remainder of the party had come up, and stood in a group around the lifeless body, contemplating the sad spectacle. The Hurons were their mortal enemies, but the sight, instead of inspiring pleasurable emotions, engendered the keenest apprehensions of their own safety. Even where they were grouped together, there were indubitable evidences of a sanguinary combat not many hours preceding. Blotches of blood here and there stained the dry grass, and close by them the head of an arrow had penetrated several inches into a tree, where it was still remaining, and a few feet farther to the right lay a broken rifle. It must have been a hand-to-hand fight, for the only visible wound on the dead savage was a deep cut, made apparently with a tomahawk, leading from the right eye to the left corner of the mouth, from which the blood had flowed in a torrent over his begrimmed features, imparting to them an appearance ghastly in the extreme. The savages had evidently suffered a defeat, otherwise, the dead body, in accordance with the Indian custom, would have been removed from the scene of conflict; but, permitting their adversaries to obtain a triumph over them, they were compelled to retire, and if the surmises of Logan and the old foresters were not without foundation,



they were still lurking in the vicinity to avenge their supposed wrongs, and gratify their insatiate appetite for the blood of their fellow-creatures.

Whilst they were still grouped around the lifeless remains of the Indian, contemplating, with mingled feelings of awe and sorrow, the mournful result of savage warfare, the crack of a distant rifle swelled upon their ears. For a moment they stood motionless and undetermined, not because fears for their personal safety formed one of the constituted elements of their character, for those hardy men—pioneers of a mountain wilderness—were too familiar with the perils incident to a frontier life to manifest or even experience a sentiment in any form allied to fear. They were men, cautious, bold and fearless, ready to encounter danger at every point—men whose souls had been tried amid the troublous scenes of border warfare—and they were not indisposed to meet danger now, if any benefit would result from the encounter. Death had often extended his skeleton hand to clutch them with its relentless grasp; but, by some fortuitous circumstance, they had always escaped. If they remained seemingly enchained to the ground, it was, because, like discreet workmen, they were calculating the probabilities against them. They were loath to act until their judgment told them that they were pursuing a proper course. One false or inconsiderate step might plunge them into difficulties from which they could not possibly extricate themselves without danger, and, perhaps, sacrifice of life. That the crack of the rifle awakened a presentiment of danger is true. They all experienced an undefined feeling of peril, an insecurity in their present position, which was not at all tenable, that admonished them of the necessity of looking about for a place of greater safety.

They were still debating in their own minds what course to pursue, when they were roused by a tremendous crash in the bush, in the direction whence the report had issued. All eyes were riveted upon the spot, and in a few seconds, a huge black bear, from whose shaggy sides the blood was bubbling out in a copious stream, made his ap-



pearance. Before they could change their position, the monster, uttering a ferocious growl, sprang in amongst them, and fell, struggling in the last agonies of death.

"The Huron," exclaimed Logan, as he extracted an arrow from the matted breast, and held it up to view, "is on the war-path. But they will find that the panther has coiled himself in his path. We will meet them like the shock of the tempest. Like a tree riven by the fire of heaven, they will fall. There will be wailing amongst the lodges of the Hurons, for those who went out on the war-path, and will never return. Twenty-four warriors, since the setting of the last sun, have disappeared like the leaves of autumn. Their bones are bleaching in the valley far away from the graves of their fathers. Their arms are rusting by their sides, because the hand that wielded them is like a withered branch in a forest of pine."

"Ay, ay," answered David Thompson, in the figurative language of the Indian Chief, "the rampaging hounds war sarcumwented in their deviltry. They war like trappers lost in the wilderness, who know not one star from the other, or that the thick bark, through a wise sarcum-spection of the nat'ral world, grows on the north side o' the trees. Thar path was full o' briars, and the Good Manito smiled not on them for many days. They war snakes in the grass, but the eye of the hawk diskivered their artful disguise. But, hist! hear you not the yells o' the reptyles?"

Just then a prolonged war-whoop burst from the throats of at least fifty savages, in hot pursuit of the wounded bear, whose course was marked by his life-blood.

"To cover! to cover! for your lives!" was the simultaneous exclamation of the whites.

"Ay, to the bush with the gal. Miles Howard, to the bush, and hide yourself in the twinklin' of an eye; and let every individual take a tree, who wallies his scalp, and can squint along a rifle-barrel like a ginnue marksman," exclaimed Daniel Browning. "And now, old Blazer," he continued, patting his long rifle, "and now, old Blazer, I



wants you to gin' the heathen dogs a hearty welcome. Speak to 'em in 'arnest, and let each load be a messenger that'll bring the death-howl out'n the gizzards o' them bloodthirsty Hurons."

Rapid as the spring of a deer, each bounded toward a clump of pine-bush standing on a knoll about a hundred yards farther up the mountain. The brush formed a dense screen, and a person once concealed within its deep recesses became invisible to those without. It covered about an acre of ground, two sides of which were inaccessible on account of a precipitous ledge of rocks, springing up perpendicularly, for many feet, from the bed of a beautiful mountain streamlet that wound its serpentine course around their base like a silver ribbon—here sparkling in the subdued rays of the sun, like a shower of brilliants, and further on, bounding through a frightful chasm with fearful velocity, hurling every impediment aside in its onward path.

At the approach of new scenes of danger, the palpitations of Blanche's heart became almost inaudible. She knew the Hurons alone by the ruthlessness of the deeds which they perpetrated in the wantonness of their spirits, and all the narratives she had ever heard recounted of their merciless transactions rose up with accumulated horror before her eyes. To this was added her own sad experience. As she approached the knoll, her steps became so feeble that she could scarcely move, and would have fallen insensible to the earth had not the vigorous arms of Miles Howard clasped her form within their embrace, and bore her along to a place of safety on the farther side of the thicket with the same facility that he would have carried an infant.

"Dear Blanche," said he, in cheerful tones, "do not give way to your fears. Danger may still be remote; but if it should come, you are surrounded by noble and true hearts, who will freely shed the last drop of their blood to protect you from harm. Come, sit down by the side of this tree; its roots will afford you a seat, while its noble trunk will shelter you from the missiles of our enemies.



You can rest here securely, for the savages cannot scale this rocky rampart, and we can easily defend the other side of the knoll."

Impressing an affectionate kiss on her pale but lovely cheek, which spoke to the heart of the poor girl a language far more eloquent than words, he withdrew to the outer edge of the thicket, toward which the savages were now approaching, suspecting nothing, and apparently caring for nothing, in their anxiety to capture the wounded bear. The whites were standing in a group, carefully concealed from view, and, as Miles approached, Colonel Cresap remarked:

"I am convinced, my brave comrades, that blood again is about to be shed. We have left behind us a broad trail, and the quick eye of the Huron will soon detect it, and discover our place of concealment. Our numbers they can easily determine, and, as a natural consequence, they will make a desperate effort to dislodge us. We must not prove to be sluggards when the hour of trial arrives. If we do, our scalps will not remain long upon our heads. We last night encountered the pride of the Huron nation, but they disappeared before our onset like stubble before the flames. Another brilliant triumph awaits us, if, in the dark hour of peril, we can show a magnanimous and determined front to our enemies."

"Well, I sorter reckon," said Daniel Browning, drawing his stout, weather-beaten frame up to its full height. "I sorter reckon that them thar eternal reptyles o' th' yarth will diskiver that we are no squaws in a skrimmage they will."

"My white brothers," said Logan, "have not spoken like singing-birds. Their words are clear as the sky without clouds. Many Hurons have started on their last earthly war-path. It leads to the hunting-grounds where the Great Spirit dwells. Twelve several times has the rifle of Tah-gah-jute spoken since the full moon, and the scalps of as many Hurons are suspended at his girdle. The Good Manito of the Huron has hid his face behind the



clouds. He no longer smiles upon their project. A dark frown was on his countenance."

Saying this, the painted countenance of the Chief assumed an expression of stoical composure.

The whites now distributed themselves in small parties, so as to guard the unprotected sides of the thicket more effectually, and concealed themselves behind such barriers as Nature threw in their way.

The band of Hurons proved to be a war party, headed by the celebrated Elk-Foot, the most daring and vindictive Chief of the nation. His character was as terrible for his brutal acts as his influence with his tribe was unlimited. With many a thrilling legend is the name of this Chief identified.

When they approached the dead carcass of the bear, a shout of triumph burst from the throats of the whole party, and a savage of exquisite symmetry of person stepped forward, severed the huge claws of the animal, and presented them to the Chief, as a trophy worthy of his acceptance.

Elk-Foot received them with open manifestations of delight; but at that instant, his eye encountered the mangled remains of the dead savage, and a howl, so fierce, so wild, and yet so mournful, echoed along the gorges and clefts of mountains, that the whites, as if by common understanding, cocked their rifles, and raised them to their shoulders. They gathered around the lifeless form of the Indian, and every now and then an ominous yell broke in upon the deep solitude of the wilderness, which seemed to the little band of men on the knoll full of dangerous import, and which assumed a more open manifestation when the dead catamount was discovered, and the arrow was drawn from its side and examined. Then a burst of rage still more ferocious burst from his lips, accompanied at intervals by the hated name of Ta-gah-jute, their invincible foe.

Miles turned his glance upon the countenance of Logan, to see whether he could comprehend the nature of the thoughts chasing each other through his mind, but all



there was calm and placid, as if his features had been chiseled from the solid rock behind which he was ensconced. Every lineament of his countenance was as rigid as iron, and the only words that escaped his lips were:

"There shall be mourning amongst the wigwams of the Huron. The light from the sun shall be shut out by a dark cloud."

Then, for the first time, a gleam of savage ferocity played for a moment, like a flash of lightning, about the distended pupils of his eyes.

The leaders of the Hurons, meanwhile, held a brief consultation, whilst the less important personages of the band commenced examining the ground, to find the trail of their mortal enemy. In a moment, their success was made apparent by a single shout of triumph—then another, and another, until the whole band had united in the bellowings of exultation that rose and swelled along the hills like the yells of a thousand incarnate fiends, rejoicing over the fall of a Christian spirit. Then, as if in utter recklessness of danger, a young Huron, of tall and commanding appearance, whose countenance, painted black, indicated a sanguinary and malignant spirit, followed along on the trail of the whites. Logan observed his approach, and a dark frown, like the fleeting shadow of a cloud, passed over his stolid features. Then, loosening his scalping-knife in its sheath, he silently awaited the coming of the savage. When he drew near the thicket, he paused for a moment, and peered within its deep recesses, and being apparently satisfied with the scrutiny, he moved forward with the noiseless tread of the cougar. The eyes of the Mingo were rivetted upon him with the glare of a wild beast. When the Huron approached within a few feet, Logan sprang from his concealment, and, at a single bound, plunged his scalping knife to the hilt into the breast of the astonished savage. He sank down without a groan, immediately expired, and in an instant the reeking scalp dangled at the girdle of the victorious Mingo. As he resumed his former place of concealment, every



lineament of his countenance, for a fleeting instant, glowed with a blaze of triumphant exultation.

After a few moments duration, another savage followed slowly on the trail of his unfortunate predecessor. He was suffered to proceed unmolested to the edge of the bushes, when, observing the prostrate form of the savage weltering in his own blood, he stood for a moment the very personification of amazement, and then, uttering his wild war-cry, he turned quickly upon his heel, with the intention of retracing his steps; but a bright, gleaming sheet of flame issued from the extended barrel of Daniel Browning's rifle, and the shriek of agony, and the upward bound announced that the messenger of death, hurled from the unerring rifle, had found another victim. Logan darted forth, like an arrow, from his place of concealment, and before the Hurons could understand his design, or recover from their astonishment, he had whipped out his scalping knife, passed it rapidly around the unresisting head of the savage, and tore the scalp loose from the bleeding skull. Shouting his triumphant battle-cry, he shook his bloody trophy before the eyes of his foes, and disappeared in the thicket.

An act of such consummate daring took the Hurons completely by surprise. For a moment they remained grouped together, like a herd of startled deer, scarcely realizing the truth of what had been made manifest to their organs of sight. But, at length, they recovered from their momentary confusion, and one loud and prolonged howl of rage broke in upon the deep quietude that had settled down upon the forest, and awoke a thousand echoes along the rocky defiles of the mountain. Scattering themselves, the Hurons now glided from tree to tree up the hill, carefully guarding their persons from sight. Once or twice, the backwoodsmen essayed their powers with the rifle at their fleeting forms, but a yell of defiance, or a taunting laugh, was the only effect of their skill. Their progress was wary in the extreme. Some threw themselves flat upon the earth, and noiselessly crept from bush to bush, whilst others would bound rapidly from one



tree to another, thus defying the skill of the best marksman. After moving forward in this manner for some time, they at length arrived within thirty or forty yards of the thicket, and, after screening themselves for a few seconds behind trees and logs, careful not to expose any part of their persons by a simultaneous movement, they sprang forward and fired into the bushes. The missiles flew harmlessly over their heads, and they, in turn, elevated their pieces; a horizontal column of flame and smoke was seen to issue from the motionless tubes, and the wild and despairing shrieks borne to the ears of the whites assured them that their aim was taken with fatal precision. The savages fled impetuously down the hill, leaving their less numerous adversaries still in possession of the knoll. All then grew quiet. An unbroken solitude seemed to brood over the place. With a quiet laugh at their success, Daniel Browning remarked:

"Well, the rampaging devils have sneaked away to consart some more o' thar cunnin' contraptions to sarcumwent us, but I sorter reckon that the wisdom o' a pale-face can do more in a skrimmage than that o' a thousand sich short-sighted creatures. Let 'em come at us ag'in, and we'll extarminate the imps o' the yarth completely."

"Do you think they will renew the combat?" inquired Miles.

"Anan?"

"Are you of opinion that the Hurons will attack us again?"

"Will the sun set in the West?" asked Daniel, by way of reply. "To be sure they'll try us ag'in, or I'm no judge o' Injin natur'. When the wolf once obtains the scent o' blood, he's not goin' to sneak off without a mouthful. The etarnal red warmints want our scalps, and unless we manage our mettle judgmatically, and plant our bullets right into thar dirty carcasses, it'll be useless waste of powder and lead, and they'll sarcumwent us to our ruin."

"The pale-face," said Logan, in the musical language of his tribe, "speaks with the wisdom of his people. Be-



fore yon dark cloud shall pass over to the East, we will hear the report of the Huron rifles."

By this time the sun had descended nearly to the verge of the western horizon, but still shed a flood of soft golden glory over the wilderness, and tinged the few fleeting clouds along the resplendant dome of heaven with all the intermediate hues, between the narrow edging of bright yellow and the imperial purple, which changed, ever and anon, as the clouds altered their positions, until first one, then another glowing column of beauty shot up along the sky, and flooded its azure depths with all the brilliant colorings of the rainbow.

The whites gazed upon the gorgeous spectacle as the harbinger of a brighter hour, and renewed courage infused itself unseen into their hearts. Even the dark lineaments of the Mingo's countenance, so rigid and unbending in time of battle, relaxed into a pleasant smile, as he remarked:

"The Great Spirit smiles upon us. Our tomahawks will drink up of the blood of the Huron. Behold!" he continued, pointing upward where several carrion crows were wheeling in majestic circles above the tall pines, "behold! The birds of the air are still on the wing, to pick the flesh from the white bones of our enemies!"

When he ceased speaking, he rose to watch the movements of the savages, and at that moment the sharp twang of the bowstring was heard, and the arrow came whizzing through the air. It struck the rock at his feet, and was shivered into a thousand shapeless fragments. A glance in the direction whence it came, discovered the dark visage of a savage peering up over a log about forty yards distant. He had crawled, unseen, up the ascent, and had probably been waiting an opportunity to effect his purpose for an hour. He was in the act of adjusting another arrow in the bow, when the rifle of Colonel Cresap for the first time fell forward into the palm of his left hand, and in a moment afterwards belched forth its murderous contents.

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed Daniel Browning, in his quiet



way, "another red-skin is done yellin', to a sart'nty. Don't you hear the death-shriek, and that hollow groan, who can mistake it for anything but the last whoop of a pesky Injin? I sorter reckon—hist!"

His words were sealed upon his lips, by the loud, long and piercing war-whoop that rose up in startling distinctness from the hill-side immediately below them. The uproaring din lasted for at least a minute, and it seemed as though all the demons of the infernal regions were liberated, and were now enacting their hellish pranks upon earth, and filling the air with their horrid blasphemies to terrify the timid souls of men.

In an instant the backwoodsmen sprung to their feet; but a warning signal from Colonel Cresap admonished them of their imprudence, and each dropped into his place of concealment again. At that moment the Hurons again rushed up the hill in a body, brandishing their weapons in a menacing manner, and filling the air with their unearthly yells. On they came until within a few yards of the thicket, when they let off a whole volley of arrows and bullets into the bushes. Clutching their tomahawks, they bounded toward the cover of the whites. The bright flashes, and the reports of a dozen rifles met them as they advanced, mowing down their exposed ranks, and carrying death into every part of the band. For a moment they recoiled before the galling fire, but, being maddened by ill success, and frenzied by despair, they again bounded forward with great agility, determined to avenge the death of their comrades. But, fortunately for the whites, they had time to reload their pieces, and as the assailants were about to enter their cover, the edge of the bushes fringing the thicket was wrapt in one continuous blaze of fire. Then, bounding to their feet, the whites broke from their hiding-place, and, answering the demoniac war-whoop of the savages with a triumphant shout, they attacked them with such desperate courage, that they broke down the hill, with precipitation, and in turn sought a friendly shelter.

Old Ebony gazed upon the contest with ill-suppressed



emotion. He felt his inferiority. He knew that he could not mingle in an affray where the white man exerted his powers, without, perhaps, incurring a severe rebuke, and, though brave as Julius Cæsar, he was compelled, reluctantly, to remain in inaction. But at length his feelings overcame all fear of censure. He became terribly excited, and, unable any longer to maintain his neutral position, he gathered up a billet of wood, and sprung into the melee, singing with much gusto some outlandish verses of his own composition, made apparently to suit the occasion :

“ Like Solomon, in de Holy Scriptures,  
Wielding de jawbone of an ass ;  
I'll spile some ob your infarnal pictures,  
And spill your blood upon de grass.

Ah! now yell, ye blood-hounds ob ole ~~Nick~~,  
And shout ag'in your battle-cry!  
For dis ole sinner hab got a stick,  
To make de heathen bleed and die.”

He uttered a shrill “cock-a-doodle-doo,” after he had finished his song, which embraced as much real, genuine defiance in its peculiar intonations, as the clear notes of old Chanticleer himself exhibits in his native barn-yard. He then dashed in amongst the assailants, and wielded his ponderous war-club with wonderful effect. His strength was Herculean, and once inspired with the exhilarating spirit of battle, he executed feats worthy of a more exalted personage.

When the noise of the conflict had died away, all again assumed the deep quietude of the grave. The sublime stillness of the forest was complete. Not a bird or living insect gave token of its presence. All nature, animate and inanimate, seemed hushed in repose. The limbs of the tall pines hung motionless in the air, and no living thing indicated this as the battle-ground of late contending hosts, struggling even unto death for the mastery! Human forms were dispersed over the earth, it was true;



the power of locomotion, volition, and all the grand machinery, the prerequisites of a living, breathing and reasoning being, had departed from the earth-bound tenebment. No sounds escaped from their blood-stained lips. But the effects of the fierce passions of angry man were present. Those inanimate forms of what were once men, with brows radiant with the moral image of God, roaming the free earth in the pride of consummate strength—blessed with a reasonable portion of common sense, though wild in their nature as the limitless forests in which they loved to roam, told a tale replete with horror.

Time passed on rapid wings. The sun disappeared behind the blue hills of the West, and a bank of dark clouds drifted swiftly towards the East. The solemn hush of the forest was succeeded by fitful gusts of wind, that whistled with mournful cadence through the sombre pines, and seemed like a requiem for the repose of the silent dead.

Night closed in upon the scene. Its dark mantle enveloped the earth in gloomy shadows, and here and there a single star shed its feeble rays through the interstices of the clouds.

The long-continued silence of the Hurons was portentous of approaching evil. They had some scheme in contemplation, and only waited the darkness of night to put it in successful operation. The whites grew impatient for some manifestation of their design, but the overwhelming ill-luck of the savages had made them wary and circumspect in the extreme.

"Well, now," exclaimed David Thompson, his desire to speak getting the better of his habitual silence, "well, now, if that don't beat all natur'. Them lyin' warmin' ar' consultin' some deviltry, or they think we are goin' to leave our hidin'-place, to gin 'em a chance at our scalps: but they'll be mightily mistaken in their knowledge o' a white-skin. What! As I'm a mortal man, fashioned arter the image o' the Maker, the pesky thieves have set the woods on fire! It's a wee spark now, but the next puff o' wind wil' fan it inter a fierce blaze. Thar, see its forked tongues, how they lick up the dry grass and leaves



in thar voracious jaws! Ay, and thar's a red-skin with a bunch o' burnin' flags in his hand, trailin' the rampaging element along the side o' the mountain! Now, though I'm averse to spillin' human blood, when thar's no necessity for it, we'll try the power o' my old speakin' trumpet. She's as good a piece as ever was sighted, and when she speaks, she in general brings the reptyles howlin' to the yarth. I never knowed her to miss, though I reckon as how she's spoke to the number o' at least a hundred red-skins in her time; and them as she didn't double up with a pain in thar entryles, scampered off with a hole in their hides, made by a ball sent by a seven-grooved barrel. Lord! how funny it war to see 'em tearin' through the bush as if old Nick had kicked 'em in een'."

After delivering himself of this speech, the old forester laughed heartily in the subdued way of a backwoodsman, and then, after a momentary pause, he continued:

"Now, my friends, see how that imp o' tarnation will double up inter a knot, as all on 'em together can't untie. I'll plant the mettle right ker-wallop inter his abdominals."

The old backwoodsman deliberately elevated his long rifle to his shoulder, and, for a single instant, his eye gleamed along the fatal instrument, the finger was pressed gently upon the trigger, a loud report succeeded, and the bullet was hurled with a hissing sound through the air, on its errand of death. The incautious wretch threw his arms aloft in the wildest despair, and then doubling himself up into a knot, as the old man had predicted, and uttering an agonizing shriek, he fell forward on his face and expired.

This unforeseen event was followed by a yell of defiance, blended with a thirst of vengeance, long, loud and terrific, from the savages. Their ranks were being reduced by a slow but infallible process, but they still had sanguine hopes of eventually triumphing over their exulting adversaries. It was true, all expedients hitherto essayed had signally failed; but supposing there were no means of checking the wild hurricane of fire, no rushing down upon



the whites, with a speed and volume that threatened inevitable destruction, they awaited the issue with confident expectations of a favorable result. At every succeeding puff of wind, the roaring conflagration was hurled toward them with increasing velocity. Its forked tongues, sometimes leaping up in the air for many feet, would bound forward at each gust of wind, and roll along amongst the dry grass and leaves, like a huge ball, blasting every living shrub in its path, and leaving the earth behind black and desolate. The snapping and cracking of burning bush, and the hissing of the flames, were incessant; whilst to render the scene still more grand and terrific, the demoniac war-whoop of the Hurons grew more loud and frequent, interrupted at intervals by the crash of falling trees, those gigantic monarchs of the forest, that had stood for hundreds of years unharmed by the tempest, and unscathed by the lightnings of heaven. And a large pack of wolves, too, attracted to the spot by the scent of blood, set up their dismal howls, as if fearful that the devouring element would consume the dead carcasses scattered promiscuously over the ground, and deprive them of their wonted feast.

The less experienced of the band of whites gazed upon the scene with thrilling emotions. They dreaded the result, and how to avert the evil consequences they knew not, and could only await in silence for others, more fertile in resources, to devise some expedient for the occasion. All felt the peril to be imminent, and each gazed into the countenance of the other, to gather hope from its expression. Blanche, who had glided almost unseen into the group, looked pale and haggard. Her eyes were swollen with recent weeping, and she appeared the very impersonation of despair, though still more exquisitely beautiful than ever. Her long raven tresses flowed in graceful ringlets about her alabaster neck, and her lofty brow had grown more intensely white by her sufferings. Miles clasped her fondly to his breast, and his soothing words acted like a balm to her wounded spirit.

“Fear not, dear Blanche; hope still inspires our hearts



with confidence. Colonel Cresap, who is a tower of strength, is sanguine of overcoming the cunning of our inexorable enemies. They are cruel and bloodthirsty, but the superior sagacity of the white man must triumph over their subtle tricks. We have already taught them a lesson that will prevent their closer approach, and whilst they remain at a distance, but little danger need be apprehended. Be composed, then, dearest Blanche," and then solemnly pointing to Heaven, he added: "and if all human resources prove ineffectual, His omnipotent arm will freely be interposed in our behalf."

"The Lord forgive them their murderous deviltries!" exclaimed David Thompson. "They have hemmed us in with fire and tomahawk, and ar' now skulking about to ease us o' the ha'r natur' placed on our heads as ornaments. But they'll diskiver as how the pale-face is no more without his larnin' than a fox is of nat'ral instinct. They must be outwitted, or the wolves that's prowlin' about will pluck the flesh from our bones before the risin' o' another sun."

"The Hurons are dogs," said Logan; "and when a Mingo lifts his voice in anger, the whole nation howls."

"Well," said Daniel Browning, "thar's two ways to cheat theimps out'n their game. The first is to rake the leaves away fernen't this old bog, to gin' us a place to stand on, and when the fire and smoke comes close enough to hide us from the reptyles, to set 'em on fire on the opposite side. By the time the flames o' yonder fire reach us, the thicket will be clean as if swept by a new broom. Howl! ye accursed serpents o' the yarth," he continued, as another fierce yell of exultation was borne past on the wind, "that's all the satisfaction ye'll ever git; for the wisdom o' ginuine white folks will head you in your infernal willainy—if it don't, my eye never squinted along a rifle-barrel."

"And the other?" inquired Colonel Cresap.

"Plain as daylight. It is to gin the red-skins the slip, by slidin' down the face o' the rock, off here to the right,



into the rivulet, and follow its course until we git out'n the hearin' o' the skulkin' knaves."

After a brief consultation, the latter expedient was resolved upon as the more feasible. They had not long to wait an opportunity to put it into operation. The roaring and crashing of the conflagration, as it extended its red arms to the right and left, was most terrific. The wind had swelled into a gale, forcing large volumes of smoke and vapor in the direction of the besieged. Availing themselves of the friendly protection thus afforded, they silently withdrew from their perilous position on the knoll, and, one by one, sliding down the frightful precipice, entered the stream. Its waters glowed beneath the light of the devouring element, like a stream of liquid amber.

"Now, friends," whispered David Thompson, "be quick, but silent. In a reg'lar scamper like this, from the vicinity o' Injin neighbors, who have a wolfish hankerin' arter our scalps, it would be well to mind how we set our feet in the water, for the ears o' a red-skin ar' mighty keen. Keep your heads down, and mind the rocks."

"Thar's wisdom," said Daniel, in a subdued tone, "thar's wisdom in that. We must be sarcumspect, or we'll have the whole yelpin' crew on our scent, like so many rampagin' devils. We must leave no trail behind, for I've sometimes thought Injin natur' could follow the flight o' a pigeon through the air, and scent the track o' a deer through the bush"—

A low, hissing sound, like that of a snake, interrupted the old qackwoodsman, and a scarcely audible whisper ran through the party, giving them to understand that new dangers threatened them. The hissing came from the lips of Logan, who was a short distance in advance. His tall, gainly form, so exquisite in its symmetrical proportions when standing erect, was bent slightly forward; one foot was raised, as if in the act of stepping, and his fine Grecian head was gently inclined to the left, to assist his organs of hearing. A rustling in the leaves denoted the approach of some one, and in a moment the pendent branches



were noiselessly thrust aside, and Elk-Foot stood in the presence of Mingo. His astonishment was complete. For a moment he stood as if fascinated. His brilliant eyes glared wildly from one to another of the startled party, and at last were fixed with a piercing look upon the rigid and iron-like features of Logan. The noble Chief encountered the gaze of his adversary with a look as stern and unflinching as that of the eagle, when his eye is riveted upon the broad glare of the sun.

"A Mingo is a cooing dove," exclaimed Elk-Foot, in the melodious language of the Huron, "that fears the swoop of the hawk."

"The Huron," answered Logan, whilst every lineament of his dark countenance was illuminated with a gleam of savage ferocity, "is a singing-bird. His heart is full of lies. A Mingo is a warrior. His trail is crimsoned with the blood of the Hurons. There will be wailing amongst their lodges. Many went on the war-path, but will never return."

"A Mingo boasts like a silly squaw. When the hawk conquers his prey, we know it by the feathers he leaves behind."

"Behold!" exclaimed Logan, exhibiting the trophies of his prowess, "these shall smoke in the wigwam of a Mingo."

A malignant scowl settled like a thunder-cloud upon the brow of Elk-Foot, and he deliberately raised his tomahawk, and hurled it with all the force of his arm, full at the head of Logan, and at the same time shouted his wild war-whoop, in tones so long, fierce and formidable, that it caused the hot blood for an instant to stagnate in the veins. The wary chief was as quick as his subtle adversary. Bending forward to evade the blow aimed at his life, he drove his keen scalping-knife through and through the throat of the Huron. Then, tearing off the tuft of hair, which, through a nice appreciation of that chivalrous honor so characteristic of Indian warriors, he had suffered to grow upon the crown of his head, and sending back into



the very teeth of the Hurons a victorious shout, Logan led the way, at a rapid pace down the stream.

After the lapse of a few moments, which sufficed to place several hundred yards between the antagonists, a prolonged and mournful yell, sounding in the gale like the last wailings of a crushed and broken spirit, ere it parts forever from the material frame, reached the ears of the fugitives.

"'Tis the red-skins mourning over their Chief," whispered Daniel Browning, availing himself of a momentary pause in their flight to speak. "I conclude we'll not be troubled with thar kind attentions any more, arter that sound drubbin'; if we do, I'm no judge of Injin natur', that's sartin."

"That's true, Dan'el," said David. "unless we meet another band o' the evil-doers atwixt this and the settlement, whieh, considerin' all things, isn't likely. If we do, howsomever, the Lord forgive me the wicked thought, the crack o' my rifle will be heard many times in the wilderness; for there's no keepin' a man back when his blood is fired with anger. I've slain many red-skins in my day; but, thank the Lord, it was done in defence o' my old and worn-out carcass."

"Self-preservation," said Miles, in reply, "is the primary law of Nature. All law recognizes it as a fundamental principle, established from the very nature of things. You slew the savages in defence of life, and from no malicious motives, and that fact affords ample justification. The upbraidings of your conscience will never molest you on that score."

"I know but little, my boy," answered David, whilst a melancholy smile played about his countenance. "I know but little consarnin' the natur' o' law, and whilst I remain a wanderer on the face o' the 'arth, which can't be long, for my old frame is much afflicted o' late, I bone to have but little to do with what seems a useless contraption; but I know that when an evil-disposed red-skin raises his hand in malice aforethought to take that away which the Creator in His wisdom bestowed, and I speak



to him through the muzzle o' my rifle, I violate no law o' God or man."

"Them's my sentiments," ejaculated Daniel Browning. "If one o' the evil serpents chooses to risk his scalp, I'm not one to violate the laws o' the land, but old Blazer would plug it to him quicker nor a beaver could dive under water. But, if so be, you're all willin', will push forward on the home-path. The yellin' o' them pesky imps o' darkness still rings in our ears, and its not safe to tarry long in the neighborhood."

They moved off, little suspecting that one of the most inveterate and inexorable of their enemies was pursuing their trail with a doggedness of resolution that portended success in his dark schemes.

The scene of the stirring occurrences—manifestations of man's conflicts and his passions—which we have been endeavoring to portray, was, at the time of which we are writing, a limitless forest, robed with gigantic trees, whose tall, straight trunks rose up majestically to an immense height; and interlaced their huge branches in such a manner as to form an almost endless canopy in places so dense as to exclude the rays of the sun. But time and the relentless ax of the woodman have done much to destroy the magnificent growth of timber. Its grandeur has partially disappeared; and where the wolf and the panther set up their dismal howls, and the fox and bear dwelt in profound security; where the untutored savage roamed in quest of game, performed the war-dance to the monotonous music of his rude instrument, or uttered his diabolical incantations around the doomed victim, there are now noble farms, on which the contented husbandman "plies the sinews of industrious toil," and reaps a handsome remuneration. At every step, his happy song, blended with the lowing of countless herds and tinkling bells, swells sweetly upon the ear. Scarcely a vestige of the boundless forest, which a hundred years ago encumbered the earth, now remains to remind us of what it once was. Sad havoc has been waged in its mighty depths. Many of its noble trees have long since been converted into ships—



those floating palaces of the ocean, those miniature worlds, types of man's ingenuity, and of his indomitable energy and perseverance—and are now skimming the waves of the mighty deep, battling with the fierce elements like things instinct with life.

One hundred years ago, the Alleghany Mountains were recognized as the boundary between civilization and barbarism. Here the savage met his white brother in mortal conflict. He waged a war of extermination, and met extinction. Here was the Far West of those days, and now it is at the mouth of the Columbia River, far away beneath the beautiful regions of the setting sun. Truly, the light of our luminous course has been distinguished by astonishing progression, and the fruits of that progression is boundless prosperity. A century ago, civilization was comprized within a narrow belt of land, lying immediately along the shores of the Atlantic Ocean, the average breadth of which did not exceed five degrees, but to-day it embraces within its huge arms the whole limitless continent. But if our course, in subduing a hemisphere from a state of nature, and peopling it with a patient, laborious and industrious people, has been marked by unequalled rapidity in the history of the world, our progress in the arts and sciences has been no less brilliant and triumphant. We take a just pride in lauding our native land; she deserves all our laudation, notwithstanding foreigners have called this characteristic of the true American a national self-glorification which she is in no wise entitled to. But if they take a retrospective view of the past, when she sprang forth, Minerva-like, all armed, and challenging a parallel in the history of the nations that had preceded her, they will discover much to astonish them, much to excite our "national self-glorification." Human computation can scarcely form an adequate idea of the amazing progress in everything we have undertaken, whether it be in erecting noble steamers, building fast-sailing yachts, in both of which we have fairly beaten the world, or in original inventions; nor can it form anything even approximating to a correct estimate of the overpow-



ering grandeur of our future destiny. When we endeavor to penetrate the future, our eyes become dazzled with its glory and magnificence.

Miles Howard and his companions hastened forward on their homeward path as rapidly as the nature of the circumstances would allow. Their progress was marked by many difficulties. In some places their path was rugged in the extreme; here penetrating the intricate labyrinths of the forest; there clambering up the precipitous sides of the mountain, covered with innumerable trunks of trees, which time and the action of the elements had hurled from their perpendicular positions, and scattered promiscuously over the ground; and then again penetrating deep gorges, rough with sharp and jagged rocks, and dangerous to life and limb.

But their vicinity to hostile Indians, ready at any moment to avail themselves of every opportunity to gratify their cruel thirst for human blood imparted renewed energy to their footsteps. To remain for any length of time in close proximity to them, would be sure to beget revengeful feelings, which would instigate them to the perpetration of some outrageous act, whenever their vigilance should slack. They, therefore, struggled onward with unwearied diligence, and when the morning light dawned upon the earth, they were many miles from the scene of the late conflict. The dark clouds of the previous night had entirely disappeared, and nothing was to be seen above but the measureless expanse of heaven, rendered more serenely beautiful by the golden glories of the sun, flooding its azure depths.

Morning in the wilderness is most grand and beautiful. Ancient poets have likened it to the spring-time of life, when youth, with its sanguine hopes and glorious inspiration first dawned upon us: and how true and beautiful is the comparison! Morning is usually accompanied with the genial rays of the sun, and the bright dew, sparkling upon shrub and flower, like clusters of glittering diamonds, imparting a grateful freshness to everything in nature. Hope and innocence, angel-visitants, present in



the spring-time of life, but gone before the sere leaf of autumn comes, inspire the heart with gladness, as the morning sunbeams cause all things to smile beneath their bright effulgence. The bird sends forth its sweetest hymn; the laborious little bee sweeps by, humming its monotonous song, whilst afar off the lowing of the herds, and the chiming of distant bells are heard. But alas! the bright anticipations of childhood, like the glorious light of heaven shut out by dark clouds, are too often obscured by the mists and vapors of disappointment.

Dawn discovered the Red Caps and their companions in the midst of that vast range of hills, comprising the eastern chain of the Alleghany Mountains. Their lofty cones, crowned with colossal pines, looking like "mailed warriors, wooing the virgin sky," were gilded by the first beams of the sun; and, as they stood upon their towering summits, gazing in admiration at the magnificent scene beneath, and believing themselves secure from further molestation from the savages, the shrill crack of the rifle sent it sharp vibrations through the air, and then, dying away in the distance, was succeeded by a long, loud and terrifying war-whoop. Every cleft and gorge in the grand old mountains caught up the revengeful cry, and it appeared as though a thousand echoes prolonged its horrid import.

Suspecting nothing, they manifested symptoms of surprise at the suddenness of the attack. There was something totally unexpected in the report of the rifle, and in the yell of savage triumph that followed; and, though familiar with the woods, and the revengeful passions of their wild denizens, yet they must have been endowed with more than human foresight to have foreseen that a savage, cruel and malignant, with an appetite for human gore as voracious as the grave, was stealing with noiseless steps upon their trail. None but the all-seeing eye of God could have known of his stealthy progress toward the accomplishment of a cold, deliberate and malicious design, which was to result in such fatal consequences. Through the provision of an all-wise Providence, man's vision has been circumscribed. His finite mind has not



been endowed with power to penetrate the mists of the future, and comprehend the dark mysteries secreted in its mighty womb. His sight is limited to the present.

The habitual inflexibility of the countenance of Logan for an instant relaxed into an expression of solicitude, as his eyes in turn encountered the eyes of each one of the party. His look was at length intently fixed upon old David Thompson, from whose brawny chest a dark stream of blood was issuing forth, and trickling down over his rude garments. A single glance satisfied the noble Chief that the life of the old man was rapidly ebbing away in the crimson tide bubbling from the ghastly wound; and, acting upon the impulse of the moment, he darted away into the bushes in pursuit of the brutal savage. But, at that moment, a warning signal met his ear, and as he paused, the unerring rifle of Daniel Browning fell heavily into the extended palm of his hand, and was deliberately raised to his face.

A short distance to the right hand of the party there was a high and precipitous ledge of rocks. They rose to an immense altitude, and seemed to sustain by their individual strength the combined weight and pressure of the mountain. Around the base of this natural wall, the savage had shaped his course, unseen, and by the aid of the scanty herbage growing out of the fissures in the rocks, he had ascended the dangerous ledge to the very top, and now stood upon the awful verge. His feet were planted on a single crag, projecting over the precipice. Nothing could have induced him to venture upon it, but an utter recklessness of life, and a desire to accomplish his object, for a breath, a puff of wind, or the slightest movement of the crag, must have dashed him headlong down the precipice. In his efforts to preserve his equilibrium upon the perilous brink, he had exposed a small portion of his body. The quick eye of Daniel Browning had detected it, and but a single second elapsed, after the rifle was raised to his face, when a bright sheet of flame illuminated his weather-beaten countenance for a moment, and was immediately succeeded by a shriek of mortal agony. For a



fleeting instant, the form of the daring savage, horribly convulsed, was seen clinging spasmodically to the rock, then his hold relaxed, and he fell backward over the crag, and was dashed to pieces against the rocks at the base, a thousand feet below.

Old David Thompson made strenuous efforts to conceal the expression of pain stealing over his sun-burnt features, but mortal strength could not triumph over the workings of nature. His countenance gradually assumed an appearance of intense agony, and his thick breathing showed that his career upon earth was limited to a period of short duration. He felt that the angel of death was rapidly approaching, and made an effort to speak. They raised him up to a sitting position, when he gazed intently for a moment upon the rising sun, and then said:

“This ar’ the last time I shall behold his beams. My hour is at hand. It’s hard to leave this beautiful earth, where we’ve hunted the deer, and trapped the beaver; but it’s the will o’ Heaven, and I submit. Perhaps, arter all, the idees o’ the red-skins ar’ correct, and thar may be a happy huntin’-ground above, where the braves go, to dwell in peace forever. If so, I wish to go thar. I wish to go to a land whar thar’s everlastin’ peace, and good will amongst men.

“Dan’el, my old comrade, good-bye! Your old friend is on his last ’arthly hunt. A little while, and I shall cease to be numbered amongst the living. I’m an old spruce, through whose branches the winds o’ many winters have whistled. The sap has left the trunk, and the worm is at the heart. Now, Dan’el, listen to the words o’ the dyin’ man! Forsake the woods and thar dangers. Go among your friends, and live thar till you’re called for.

“Logan, my good friend, farewell. I need not say, gin up the forest; it’s your natur’ to remain in it. Take my rifle—it will sometimes remind you o’ your old comrade, David Thompson. She’s as good a piece as ever was fired; but let not her crack be heard in a dishonest cause. And now, Miles, my boy,” he continued, with difficulty, “come here, you and Miss Blanche. I solemnly



thank the Lord, who, I'm goin' to meet face to face, that you're safe. I'm not long for this world, but thar's one act that I must see performed first. Natur' intended it, and it must be so. Thar, I place her hand in your'n. You love each other, and if the blessin' o' an old and dyin' man shall avail, you'll be happy. God bless you! God bless this little band o' men! I die in peace!"

A tear trembled in the old man's eye, over which the film of death was rapidly spreading, and ran down his furrowed cheeks. As the time of his final departure approached, his hand trembled violently, and he seemed to be much excited. His lips parted, and in a voice loud and distinct, he shouted:

"Dan'el! Logan! gin it to the evil ones. Huzza! victory's sure! Huzza! huz"—

And thus the old man expired, imagining himself in battle with his inveterate foes, the savages. Tears of heartfelt grief bedewed the cheeks of every one of that little party.

Under the direction of Colonel Cresap, a litter was formed, on which was placed the last earthly remains of the kind-hearted old backwoodsman. The sad procession then renewed their line of march, and toward evening entered the settlement. We will not dwell upon the dark spirit of desolation that brooded over the valley of the Potomac.

Old Ebony looked around him for a moment, as if at a loss to comprehend what had taken place. All seemed like a dream. His ungainly form seemed to expand three-fold in size at the remembrance of the wrongs the savages had inflicted upon the settlement, and he exclaimed in a mournful voice:

"Dem marciless heathen! dey's neber satisfied wid sheddin' de blood ob innocent folks. Fust, dey kik ole massa, and burn up de house; den dey carry away young missa, and, now dey done kill Massa Thompson. De Lord send He vengeance upon 'em. Dey's too bad to live upon dis 'arth, and ain't fit to go no place, 'cept where ole Nick hab his home. Dey's as false as de debil, and



foul as he dwellin' place. Neber catch dis nigger in dar claws ag'in."

Autumn disappeared. Winter, with its icy letters, came, and was succeeded by spring, with its genial showers, its bright buds of promise, impregnating the air with their delicious fragrance, and its greensward. The earth was laden with the beauty of a new creation, and the transparent firmament was without a cloud. The last trace of departed day still lingered in the clear heavens, and shed its magic coloring over as fair a scene as ever blessed the sight of the weary pilgrim.

It was on this eve of exquisite beauty, that a joyous assemblage had convened at Skipton, the dwelling place of Colonel Cresap. A bevy of bright-eyed damsels, with their bewitching smiles, tricked out in all the finery of the times, good, substantial homespun petticoats, surmounted with sacks, similar to those of latter-day fashions, were present; and gallant youths, and stern visaged men, each bearing in his hand the never-failing rifle, were also there. The Red Caps acted as sentinels; for Indian hostilities were again about to be waged upon the exposed frontier. Then Miles Howard led his beautiful bride to the altar, and after a sweet hymn had been sung, and a solemn invocation offered up to the throne of Grace by the good and pious missionary, they were united. They lived happy together, and died at a green old age, leaving a numerous posterity, who still boast of their descent from Miles Howard and his wife Blanche.

Old Daniel Browning never returned to the woods. Acting upon the advice of his old companion, he remained with Miles Howard, and he and old Ebony always took great delight in "shouldering their crutches, and fighting their battles over again," to the no little amusement of the young Howards growing up around them. In a few years old Daniel was laid beside the remains of David Thompson, and then Ebony followed. The three slept quietly together on the banks of the Potomac, and its ripping waves sound like a mournful requiem to their departed spirits.



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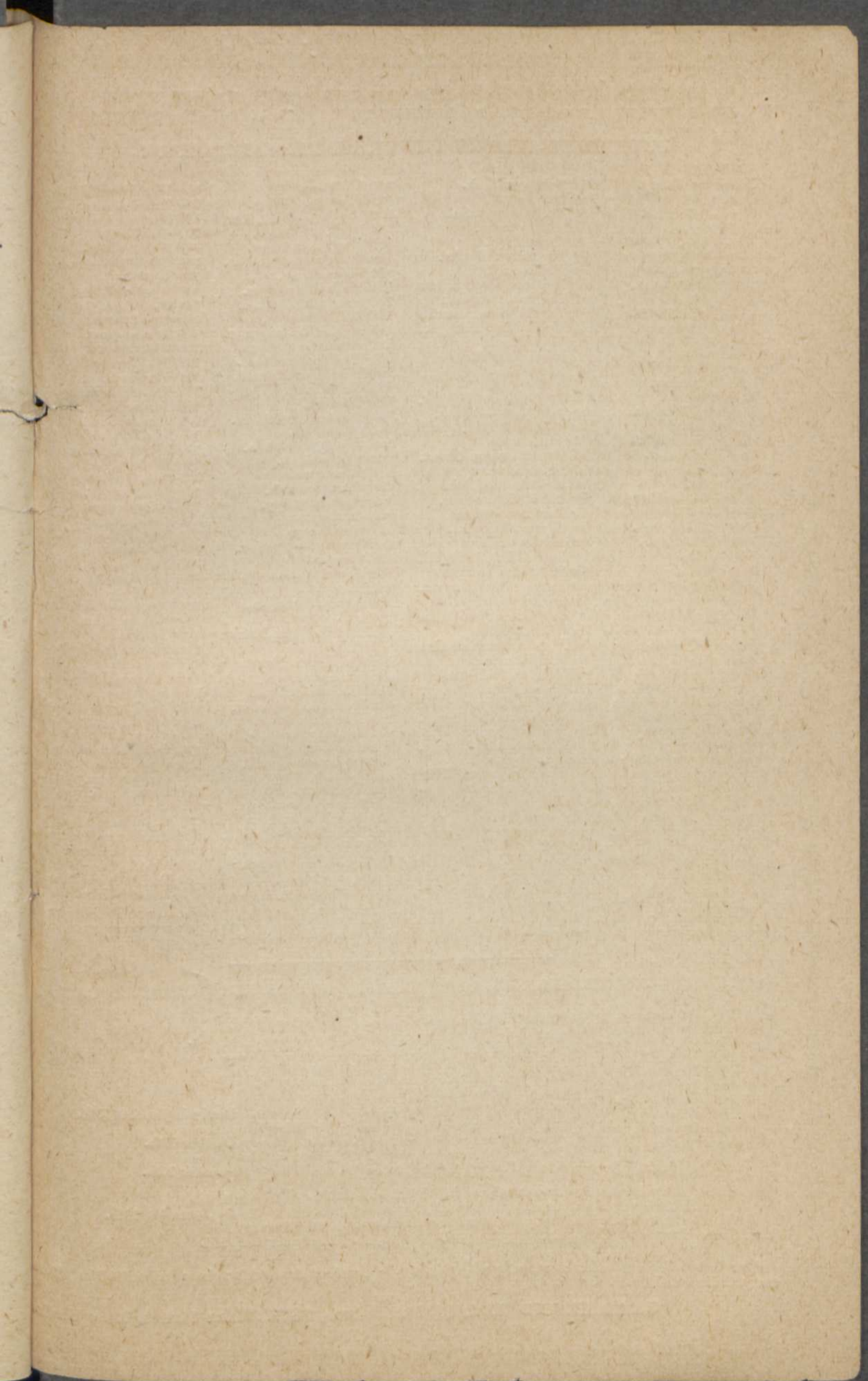
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